

BEYOND THE BORDER: MEXICO'S INTERNAL CONFLICT IS THE UNITED STATES' PROBLEM

A Monograph

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

BEYOND THE BORDER: MEXICO'S INTERNAL CONFLICT IS THE UNITED STATES' PROBLEM, by Major George P. Lachicotte III, 85 pages.

This monograph provides a starting point to address the importance of strategic guidance as it relates to operational planning for synchronized tactical actions. Analyzing Mexico's drug-war offers an interesting case study to help understand the current situation surrounding non-traditional forms of war, such as a drug related war, and how Mexico's internal conflict impacts their regional neighbors as well as the international community. The ultimate aim is to achieve a competent level of understanding in order to establish a unified regional approach that will disrupt the Mexican drug trafficking organizations and reduce violence to an acceptable and controllable level. Accomplishing this requires the unified efforts of all elements of national power from the U.S., Mexican, and regional governments by designing an operational approach that focuses efforts and unifies goals. The current U.S. and Mexican strategies work to contain drug trafficking organizations on a limited basis, but fail to fix the problem for the long-term because of their limited approach. At the conclusion, this study reveals how the employment of unified governmental approach can enhance the United States and Mexico's current security strategy by disrupting the actions of the Mexican drug trafficking organizations.

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ACRONYMS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CBP	United States Customs and Border Protection
CIPOL	State Police Intelligence Corps
CT	Counterterrorism
DEA	United States Drug Enforcement Agency
DHS	United States Department of Homeland Security
DOD	United States Department of Defense
DOJ	United States Department of Justice
DOS	United States Department of State
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	United States Governmental Accountability Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HHS	United States Department of Human and Health Services
HIDTA	High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
IC	International Community
ICE	United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IDMC	Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre
IG	Inspector General
INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
INL	United State Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IOC	International Criminal Organization

IRTPA	Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004
JIATF-South	Joint Interagency Task Force South
JIIM	Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MO	Modus Operandi
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCTC	United States National Counterterrorism Center
NDCS	National Drug Control Strategy
NDTA	National Drug Threat Assessment
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSWBCS	National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy
OCDETF	Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces
OFC	Operational Fusion Center
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SIEDO	Specialized Investigation of Organized Crime
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission of Refugees
VA	Veteran Affairs
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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INTRODUCTION

Social scientists and political scholars often see the U.S.-Mexican border as a critical vulnerability for the United States because it provides a point of entry opportunity into the country for virtually anyone.¹ As the flow of illegal immigration continues into the U.S., a more fundamental question exists as to what motivates Mexicans to come to the United States. Opportunity and hope are among the reasons for illegally crossing the Mexican-U.S. border; however, one of the major contributing factor is survival. More than 47,000 Mexican citizens lost their lives due to warring drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) from 2006-11 throughout Mexico.² Furthermore, between 2006 and 2011, DTOs assassinated twenty-seven mayors, thirteen state gubernatorial candidates (in 2010 alone), and more than five hundred Mexican government officials.³ This escalation in violence has created an unstable environment. Indeed, the lack of confidence in the Mexican government's security capability contributes greatly to the flight by the local population north to the U.S. or south to Central America in order to escape the life threatening danger.

While it is easy to focus blame on the United States' lack of involvement and the combined efforts of both the U.S. and Mexico governments' inability to employ resources appropriately, the real problem stems from misunderstanding the current situation along the

¹Matthew M. Brown, "Engaging the Borderlands: Options for the Future of U.S. - Mexican Operations. Monograph" (master's monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010), 1.

²Ted Galen Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2012), 1.

³Sara Miller Llana, "Mexico Drug War Death Toll Up 60 Percent in 2010, Why?," *The Christian Science Monitor* (13 January 2011)
<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0113/Mexico-drug-war-death-toll-up-60-percent-in-2010-Why> (accessed 12 November 2012).

border. The events in Mexico “have raised concerns about the stability of a strategic partner and neighbor” among individual members of the 112th Congress.⁴ They have conducted several hearings to discuss the DTO violence and its subsequent spillover onto U.S. soil, as well as “the efforts by the government of President Felipe Calderón to address the situation, and implications of the violence for the United States,” in order to achieve a better understanding of the current situation.⁵ Despite these efforts, the priorities for protection of the American people, the nation, and its vital interests still reside in the Pacific as well as the Middle East. For example, prior to the terrorist events of 9/11, the tensions in the Middle East and with Islamic fundamentalist organizations were under watchful eye, but little was done to because Middle Eastern based terrorist organizations perceived as having a low threat against U.S. national interests in that region.⁶ Hence, the United States’ historical behavior was historically reactionary rather than prioritizing preventive action higher in order to pre-emptively countering potential violent situation before the spillover to the U.S. Once perceived as a real threat, the responsibility for clearly defining a solution or providing goals falls onto the strategic leaders of nations involved, which includes the U.S., Mexico, as well as the international community. The next step, which is one that leaders often struggle the most with, centers on how to visualize and describe what the environment should look like in five, ten, or twenty years into the future. However, challenge emerges when trying to design and implement a plan that bridges the gap between the current

⁴June S. Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, Congressional Research Report (Washington, DC: Congress Research Service, 2012), Summary.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Rex A. Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?" *A Report Prepared under an Interagency Agreement by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress* (September 1999) <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/frd.html> (accessed December 1, 2012).

situation and the desired goal or aim. The United States Army's doctrine defines this process as the operational approach, which assists commanders and their staffs with their planning process in order to successfully inform ground-level actions or tactics with the strategic aims.⁷ As the world remains focused on the Middle East and the Asian Pacific regions, it behooves policy makers, intergovernmental organizations, and the citizenry, at large, to re-evaluate their approach and ask themselves if the international community (IC) and, more specifically, the U.S. is correctly addressing the Mexican drug war issue and the subsequent spillover effects. Army doctrine outlines an evaluation process that can be applied at the strategic level in order to synchronize efforts that maximize limited resources against a growing threat within Mexico. This suggests that strategic leaders reevaluate current policy and consider altering tactics to facilitate efforts aimed at accomplishing the U.S. strategic goals of "stability and security in Mexico."⁸

The security of the U.S.-Mexican border is a growing concern for both countries, especially since their economic relationship has grown more interdependent over recent years. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), manufacturing plants, and labor ties between the U.S. and Mexico have strengthened their economic interdependency over the last several decades. Mexican DTOs have taken advantage of established U.S.-Mexican policy

⁷Tactical level is roughly defined as the military level at which the actions of forces on the ground are employed and organized to conduct battles, engagements, and activities "to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces." The strategic level is the planning or implementation of ideas that will employ "the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives." Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations* (Washington DC: The United States Joint Chiefs of Staffs, 2011), xi-xii; operational approach, with respect to this paper, is a planning tool that helps commanders and staffs visualize where to go, what the current situation is, and how to get to that desired end state from where their organizations are at that particular time. The elements of operational art not discussed are not valued any less than the seven elements that are utilized in this paper. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0: *Unified Land Operations*, (Washington, DC: The Department of the Army, 2012), 4-2.

⁸Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*. Public Report (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 42-3.

protected trade routes created by those same economic opportunities, allowing them to feed off of American illegal drug users. Competition over the illegal narcotics market has resulted in increased violence in society, intimidation of the citizenry, and extensive coercion throughout the Mexican governance and law enforcement agencies. The Mexican government's inability to subdue drug trafficking cartels has destabilized Mexico, thus creating spillover effects into the U.S.

Mexico's DTO issues also have international ripple effects, such as allowing terrorists organizations to piggy back off of money laundering channels and infiltration routes into the U.S. established through the same drug trafficking arteries.⁹ The U.S. and Mexican governments' cooperation on this issue has been tentative at best due to political sensitivity surrounding the current U.S. immigration policy and Mexico's apprehension toward potential U.S. intervention. Thus, while Mexico's internal conflict increases at exponential rates it continues to pose more of a threat to the United States' national security. As this threat expands, the risk of degrading fragile international relations between regional neighbors becomes more prevalent because Mexico's violent situation will be the source of blame if things continue to spillover unto U.S. soil.¹⁰

When examining the United States' approach to the DTO issue, some scholars, like Ted Galen Carpenter of the Cato Institute, and national leaders, like former Mexican President Vicente Fox Quesada, claim that the focus of both countries needs to be the reexamination of

⁹John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler, *Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Report (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012), 13.

¹⁰Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, xiv. This is the analysis of the former Mexican president, Vicente Fox Quesada.

their current strategic approach.¹¹ The United States' focus has drifted away from the border in recent years due to the activity in the Middle East and in Sub-Saharan Africa. Even though the majority of Americans do not directly feel impact of the violence south of its border, the costs in U.S. border cities must be considered. Mexican violence may not make its way to northern Minnesota, but it has a direct and immediate spillover on U.S. soil and to the U.S. citizens in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The expanding conflict within Mexico's borders has captured the attention of American leaders' in these states, as well as the nation once again. However, that attention is limited because the current U.S. strategy focuses more on the Pacific and Middle Eastern geographic regions.¹² Limited U.S. attention manifest itself in forms like closing down three percent of the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and designated off-limits areas for military servicemen and women in southern Arizona due to violence and trafficking illustrates the growing concern in that area of the border region.¹³ As the situation becomes increasingly difficult to contain on both sides of the border, it is obvious to the people and local governments that the U.S. and Mexican security strategies for the region are under

¹¹Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, xiii.

¹²Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 2010, 42-3. The only mention of a security strategy for Mexico is covered in less than a page. Whereas, Asia and Middle East are continuously referenced and offer more refined guidance on the United States' strategic vision for those particular regions. The 2012 U.S. National Defense Strategy and 2011 U.S. National Military Strategy are proportionally similar in their coverage of U.S.-Mexican international relations strategy.

¹³Robert Haddick, "This Week at War: If Mexico is at War, Does America Have to Win It?," *Foreign Policy* (September-October 2010), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/09/10/this_week_at_war_if_mexico_is_at_war_does_america_have_to_win_it?page=0,0 (accessed October 15, 2012); United States Fish and Wildlife Service, "Media Advisory: Border Refuge Not Closed," *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Public Affairs Office* (June 2010) <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/docs/mediaadvisory.borderrefugeopen.62010.pdf> (accessed March 17, 2013); The reference to military restriction is based on first-hand knowledge while attending the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Military Freefall Jumpmaster Course from May-June 2008.

resourced and ill-planned to control the violence throughout Mexico.¹⁴ Therefore, large criminal organizations as well as the potentiality for international terrorist organizations can and are able to exploit these security deficiencies.¹⁵ Years of marginalizing the impact of illegal drug activities in Mexico by the Mexican government facilitated the build-up of DTO resources, funding streams, and recruitment, which is now outpacing local and federal law enforcement in Mexico and threatens the Mexican government's ability to maintain law and order.¹⁶ The violence has reached levels that outpace the U.S. joint and interagency border security capabilities, which are responsible for containing the actions of DTOs south of the U.S.-Mexico border.¹⁷

Because of regional outcries for help and assistance, public pressure from southwestern U.S. and Mexican citizens have increased in order to push for the current administrations from both countries to produce a response and a long-term security vision to produce a stable environment. The outpour for better security and more stability continues to grow louder from the population within the borderland region because the 'balloon effect' continues to exacerbate

¹⁴Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 17.

¹⁵As of August 2011, "anecdotal reports have long appeared to connect Hezbollah global operations with drug trafficking, money laundering, and other illicit activity, several recent cases in 2011 have highlighted the potential transnational reach of Hezbollah's illicit finance activities." Additionally, "terrorist organizations such as al-Shabaad...based in Mexico are turning to criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom to generate funding to continue their operations." Indicating that international terrorist organizations are present in Mexico, but their intent is still to be determined. Rollins and Wyler, *Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress*, 2012, 13, 27; Contarily, no hard evidence has been produced to indicate that any known international terrorist organizations were sponsoring terrorist activities from Mexican soil with an attempt to target U.S. related interests or territory. Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, 2012, 37.

¹⁶Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 12-4, 137-8.

¹⁷Brown, "Engaging the Borderlands: Options for the Future of U.S. - Mexican Operations. Monograph," 2010, 2.

“environmental degradation” in new areas.¹⁸ Additionally, governmental resources continue to focus on the fight against drugs and the “end users,” rather than the illicit businesses that cartels participate in and the violence that stems from competing DTOs.¹⁹

While the allocations of resources have questionable impacts because they continue to focus on cultivation and low-level criminal offenses, the larger perceived threat to the U.S. is the conflict spillover from Mexico’s internal drug war.²⁰ Compelling statistics from a 2011 National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA) reports that Mexican DTOs are currently operating in more than a thousand U.S. cities.²¹ The threat does not come from the distribution, sale, or effects of

¹⁸“Balloon effect” occurs when members of society are arrested for use of illegal drugs. In turn, those individuals are “stigmatized and marginalized.” In theory, their prior criminal records perpetuate a system that “reinforces[s] drug use because people can’t get jobs and are left on the outside of society.” Ellen Ratner, “50-Year War on Drugs Has Failed” (18 March 2012) <http://www.wnd.com/2012/03/50-year-war-on-drugs-has-failed/> (accessed 11 October 2012); The term “borderland” derives from Rachel St. John’s book, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border*. It indicates a historical depiction of how the once translucent border between the U.S. and Mexico from El Paso to the Pacific Ocean became solidified over time with wired fencing, electronic monitoring, and armed patrols. The cities, villages, and towns that once occupied south and north of this border region are now divided by physical line in the sand that created “national significance and contested power.” Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1-7.

¹⁹St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border*, 2011, 1-7; Ratner, “50-Year War on Drugs Has Failed,” 2012.

²⁰Drug Enforcement Administration, Statement of Joseph M. Arabit, Special Agent in Charge, El Paso Division, Regarding “Violence Along the Southwest Border” Before the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (24 March 2009) <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/speeches/s032409.pdf> (accessed 12 November 2012); Spillover violence is violence that entails deliberate, planned attacks by the cartels on U.S. assets, including civilian, military, or law enforcement officials, innocent U.S. citizens, or physical institutions such as government buildings, consulates, or businesses. This definition does not include trafficker on trafficker violence, whether perpetrated in Mexico or the U.S. Congressional Research Service Report, “Southwest Border Violence: Issues in Identifying and Measuring Spillover Violence: R41075 (25 August 2011), 12; This narrowed definition makes the likelihood that the United States will experience this form of spillover violence relatively small.

²¹United States Department of Justice (DOJ): National Drug Intelligence Center , “National Drug Threat Assessment 2011” <http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs44/44849/44849p.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2012), 8;

their product, but from the methodology used to establish control in a given area. The Mexican DTOs rely on terror, brutal violence, and corruption to gain access, dominate, and seize control of an area of their choosing.²² This *modus operandi* (MO), commonly referred to as the *plata o plomo* (silver or lead) ultimatum, means a person takes either a bribe or a bullet.²³ DTOs use these tactics to remove competition and to subdue law enforcement agencies.²⁴ However, even with this persuasive evidence, the U.S. strategy tends segregate its agencies to focus only on the drug problem rather than the cartels and their violent business practices.

The current U.S. strategy is to reduce and, ultimately, prevent the flow of drugs into the U.S. This strategy highlights the usage of international cooperation and interdiction efforts targeted at disrupting the drug trade industry.²⁵ The increase in violence suggests that the implementation of this strategy has done very little to affect drug smuggling into the United States from Mexico. The current strategy does even less to disrupt activities of the DTOs.²⁶

Congressional Research Service Report, “Southwest Border Violence...,” 16.

²²Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, 2012, 5-16.

²³Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 1-2.

²⁴Texas Department of Public Safety, “Texas External Assessment” (2010): 44-5. This report also claims that 230 U.S. citizens lost their lives from 2003-09 in Mexico.

²⁵Liana Sun Wyler, “International Drug Control Policy,” *GAO Report RL34543* (24 August 2009), 10; United States Office of National Drug Control Policy, “National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy 2011,” 2-3. The approach centers on three primary goals: (1) collaboration with international partners to disrupt the drug trade, (2) support the drug control efforts of major drug source and transit countries, and (3) attack key vulnerabilities of drug trafficking organizations.

²⁶Ratner, “50-Year War on Drugs Has Failed,” 2012; Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 17; Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, 2012. Mexico’s failing strategies are articulated in multiple Congressional Research Reports, but June S. Beittel produces the most current Congressional report to summarize Mexico’s strategy.

Failing to disrupt the drug business practices of DTOs has greater implications, such as illegal arms smuggling, human trafficking, illegal immigration, and facilitation of international terrorists' potential infiltration into the U.S. Rather than segregating the governmental counter to illegal activities, the United States in conjunction with the Mexican government, and possibly the international community, needs to design an approach that will synchronize efforts and operations across all elements of national power in order to shock drug trafficking organizations.²⁷ Even though an operational approach is a U.S. military doctrinal term, the essence of the definition is applicable to the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) domains.²⁸ A unified goal and subsequent supporting efforts and operations can lead to an approach that disrupts the Mexican drug trafficking organizations before Mexico's fire spreads to its neighbor's house.²⁹

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SITUATION

Rise of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Mexico

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Colombia's Pablo Escobar Gaviria was the head of the Medellín Cartel and the primary exporter of cocaine, controlling organized criminal

²⁷The concept of shock derives from Shimon Naveh's concept of operational shock. He defines operational shock as a way to make the adversary's system collapse by preventing the enemy from accomplishing its desired goal/s. Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Oxon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997), 16.

²⁸M. Wade Markel, Henry A. Leonard, Charlotte Lynch, Christina Panis, Peter Schirmer, and Carra S. Sims, *Developing U.S. Army Officers' Capabilities for Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Environments*, A Report for the United States Army (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2011), xiii.

²⁹Mexico's former president, Vicente Fox Quesada, first articulated the notion of the spillover effect that occurs from Mexico's drug war being a fire that can potentially spread to the neighboring countries due to an inability to maintain internal security and stability. Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, xiv.

networks on a global scale. When enforcement efforts intensified in South Florida and the Caribbean in the early 1990s, the Medellín and Cali cartels in Colombia organized partnerships with the Mexico-based traffickers to transport cocaine through Mexico into the United States.³⁰

Due to Mexico's pre-existing smuggling infrastructure, established from the illegal transportation of heroin and marijuana as well as illegal immigration routes originating during the prohibition era, Mexican drug traffickers found their end of the partnership easy to uphold. By the mid-1980s, the Mexican drug trafficking organizations solidified themselves as reliable transporters of Colombian cocaine. By late 1980s, the Mexican-Colombian agreement settled on a "payment-in-product" method of compensation for transporting Colombian merchandise, which comprised of thirty-five to fifty percent of the market price per shipment.³¹ Thus, Mexican smugglers transitioned to traffickers by becoming directly involved in the distribution and transportation of cocaine, as well as the human rights violations against anyone opposes or facilitates their illegal drug trade.³² In the mid-1990s, Colombian law enforcement killed Pablo Escobar (kingpin of the Medellín cartel) and captured the Orejuela brothers, Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez (head of the Cali Cartel). "Although the Cali and Medellín cartels continued to operate, the removal of their leaders weakened them and created an opening for Mexican

³⁰United States Drug Enforcement Agency, "History of DEA Operations," *DEA History, U.S. DEA*, http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/history/history_part2.pdf (accessed 23 July 2012).

³¹Stratfor.com, "Mexico, US, and Italy Cocaine Connection" (18 September 2008) <http://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/mexico-us-italy-cocaine-connection> (accessed 12 August 2012).

³²"Smuggling can be defined as the transportation of goods or persons from one place to another in an illegal way. It is the carrying of goods or transportation of persons in violation of the existing laws and regulations....Trafficking is the violation of the rights of an individual or violation of human rights." Prabhat, "Difference between Smuggling and Trafficking" *DifferenceBetween.net* (4 June 2011) <http://www.differencebetween.net/language/words-language/difference-between-smuggling-and-trafficking/#ixzz2CSMFmDHt> (accessed 16 November 2012).

organized crime groups ...to seize control” of the North American illicit drug market.³³

Félix Gallardo, the Guadalajara Cartel kingpin, orchestrated the foundation of Mexico’s modern-day drug-trafficking network. He laid the groundwork by cultivating “friendships with politicians, businessmen, and journalists, as well as with other drug lords. Distributing power and spoils, he built a nationwide trafficking network whose members rarely resorted to violence.”³⁴ He shaped the territorial boundaries for local power players and crossovers tolls paid to him in order to maintain order.³⁵ In 1989, the Mexican government incarcerated Gallardo, and although he attempted to continue to mastermind operations while in prison, his efforts failed.³⁶ However, Gallardo’s arrest was significant because it marked the beginning of Mexico’s loss of order and rise of violence. Once Gallardo was locked up and pressure was placed onto the Colombians, other rising cartels had an opening to develop “their own drug operations from scratch—covering transportation, warehousing, and, eventually, the sale of the product itself.”³⁷

Over time, the balance of power among the various Mexican cartels shifted as others emerged; meanwhile, the older cartels weakened and collapsed. Cartels jockeying for power was and remains the central cause for conflict in Mexico. A disruption in the system, such as the arrests or deaths of cartel leaders, generated bloodshed as rivals move in to exploit the power vacuum.³⁸ As Fred Burton of Stratfor Global Intelligence claims, “leadership vacuums are

³³Tomas Keller and Francesco Pipitone, "Inside Mexico's Drug War," *World Policy Blog* (9 September 2010) <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2010/09/09/inside-mexicos-drug-war> (accessed 23 July 2012).

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸Fred Burton, "Mexico: The Price of Peace in the Cartel Wars," *The Stratfor Global*

sometimes created by law enforcement successes against a particular cartel, thus cartels often will attempt to use law enforcement against one another, either by bribing Mexican officials to take action against a rival or by leaking intelligence about a rival's operations to the Mexican government or the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.”³⁹ While many factors have contributed to the escalating violence in Mexico, security analysts in Mexico City trace the origins of the increasing conflict to the breakdown of informal drug-trafficking agreements and government’s loss of control under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), beginning in the late 1980s.⁴⁰

As the Mexican cartels began expanding their control over drug supplies, so did their associated profit margins. As profit margins increased so too did need for cartel expansion, further exacerbating the violence because competing cartels fought for every inch of territory. In 2009, “U.S. National Drug Intelligence Center statistics estimated that Mexican and Colombian drug trafficking organizations generated somewhere in the range of \$17 billion to \$38 billion annually in gross wholesale proceeds from drug sales in the United States. By comparison, Google’s worldwide revenue in 2009 was \$23.6 billion.”⁴¹ As these earnings increased, so did

Intelligence (2 May 2007) http://www.stratfor.com/mexico_price_peace_cartel_wars (accessed July 23, 2012).

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰The Institutional Revolutionary Party (Spanish: *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI) is a Mexican political party that held power in the country—under a succession of names—for seventy-one years. The PRI is a member of the Socialist International, as is the rival Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), making Mexico one of the few nations with two major, competing parties that were part of the same international grouping. However, PRI is not considered a socialist party in the traditional sense; its modern policies being characterized as centrist. Its membership in the International dates from the Mexican Revolution and the founding of the party by Plutarco Elías Calles, when the party had a clearer leftist orientation. Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, “PRI: ¿ave fénix?” *El Universal: Editorials* (26 February 2007) <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/editoriales/36869.html> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁴¹Keller and Pipitone, “Inside Mexico’s Drug War,” 2010.

the violence as cartels battled for power, control, and wealth. Violence did come to a brief lull in the late-1990s; however conflict has steadily increased since 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the drug war claimed more than twenty thousand lives. The first mass graves began to appear in Mexico around 2004 and local media publicized numerous accounts of “gruesome killings involving beheadings and torture utilizing acid.”⁴² In a single mass grave incident, “in the border town of Nuevo Laredo, more than a hundred people were murdered from January to August, 2005.”⁴³ On 26 April 2008, one battle between members of the Tijuana and Sinaloa cartels in the city of Tijuana, Baja California, resulted in the deaths of seventeen people.⁴⁴ Competition for territory, as well as, for recruits became the foundation of the cartel business expansion philosophy, but the acquisition of resources only increased the level of violence in Mexico.

The level of power and influence that cartels have over the population via *plata o plomo* tactics facilitates their recruitment capability. Mexican drug lords and their associated cartels do have some recruitment similarities to the private military organizations in Sub-Saharan African countries.⁴⁵ Mexico’s version of private military organizations do not appear to be engaged in overthrowing the existing government, like organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, but like them they are “small and highly hierarchical, with power concentrated at the top of the organization, often in a single charismatic leader, with a high degree of discipline and severe punishment for

⁴²Keller and Pipitone, “Inside Mexico’s Drug War,” 2010.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Robin Emmott, “Seventeen killed in Mexico drug battle near U.S.,” *Reuters* (28 April 2008) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/04/27/us-mexico-drugs-idUSN2639514820080427> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁴⁵World Bank. “Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy” (2003) <http://web.worldbank.org/external/default/main?menuPK=477815&pagePK=64168092&piPK+64168088&theSitePK=477803> (accessed 5 June 2012), 56.

dissent.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Mexican drug cartels’ private military organizations are extremely costly because they must be able to support full-time employment, fund training, purchase equipment, and finance supplies to support the militant members and their business, as well as securing other facets of their operation.⁴⁷ The drug wars in Mexico have become increasingly dependent upon military grade armaments in order to gain the upper hand against one another and as a means of staying ahead of the military and police. Thomas Keller and Francesco Pipitone of the World Policy Institute recounted an example in 2008 where a “government raid on the Gulf Cartel seized a cache of anti-armor weapons, cluster grenades, anti-aircraft missiles, armored HUMVEES, and even chemical protective suits. *Los Zetas* have also developed ties with American and other foreign criminal and paramilitary groups.”⁴⁸ In fact, cartels have known affiliations with U.S. gangs and have infiltrated the U.S. armed forces in order to increase their recruiting pool and gain access to military weaponry.⁴⁹ This illustrates the ability of cartels to penetrate into the U.S. armed forces not only to increase the armament capability but also to facilitate their intelligence gathering, training, and tactics.

Causes and Costs of Instability in Mexico

Understanding how, when, exactly where, and why Mexico erupted into a violent state of being is necessary in order to determine the future conditions and the United States and Mexico desires in the next five, ten, or even twenty years. The first part of an operational approach is to

⁴⁶World Bank, "Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy," 56.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Keller and Pipitone, "Inside Mexico's Drug War," 2010.

⁴⁹Geoffrey Ramsey, "Arrest of Would-Be 'Zetas' Shows Risk of US Military Infiltration," *Insight Crime* (29 March 2012) <http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/2415-arrest-of-would-be-zetas-shows-risk-of-us-military-infiltration> (accessed 23 July 2012).

comprehend the current situation in order to help leaders conceptualize an approach that will set the conditions to achieve the desired “political aim.”⁵⁰ Comprehension of the current situation in Mexico will examine three areas: common causes of violence as a result Mexico’s DTO actions, the costs associated with Mexico’s drug war violence, and the historical relations between Mexico and their neighboring countries with respect to how that relates to the current situation.

The most current escalation of Mexico’s violence began in approximately 2006, when Felipe Calderón, then Mexico’s president, initiated an offensive against drug-trafficking organizations, also referred to as “cartels.”⁵¹ As of 2011, his drug offensive included “fifty thousand soldiers and thousands more new policemen” to combat numerous criminals working with cartels.⁵² Depending on the source, there exist between seven to eleven major drug cartels in Mexico which have organized themselves in a military fashion with a hierarchy of command and the resources and training to match or exceed the capabilities of the Mexican military. Figure 1 shows the areas of influence in Mexico and the areas controlled by each cartel. The cartels go so far as to openly display their affiliations through standardization of their uniforms or symbols on their clothing. This action demonstrates the level of control they have over the law enforcement and populace. For example, Los Zetas have controlled the drug trafficking along the eastern portion of the U.S.-Mexico border for the last ten years; while overtly display “the letter ‘Z’ in

⁵⁰Carl von Clausewitz, ed. and trans., *On War* (Princeton: Princeton Paperbacks, 1976), 90.

⁵¹Stephen Harper, "Shallow Graves, Deepening Alarm," *The Economists* (28 April 2011) <http://www.economist.com/node/18621268> (accessed 21 July 2012).

⁵²Sandy, "Huffington Post," *Mexico Drug War a Lost Cause as Presently Fought* (March 10, 2011) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sandy-goodman/mexico-drug-war-a-lost-ca_b_833097.html (accessed 21 July 2012).

their uniforms” as a means of demonstrating their power.⁵³ Figure 2 shows these areas of influence that the “cartels” have with regards to smuggling routes.



Figure 1. Approximate Areas of Operation of Major Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations.

Source: United States Department of Homeland Security, "Reference Aid: Mexico: The Sinaloa Drug Cartel," Department of Homeland Security: Office of Intelligence and Analysis. (28 October 2010) <http://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-Sinaloa.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2013). This figure is a product of the United States Department of Homeland Security, which is public domain and does not require copyright authorization.

⁵³Buggs, Borderland Beat Reporter, "The Borderland Beat," *Memoirs of a Zeta Hitman: Part I* (4 February 2011) <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2011/02/memoirs-of-zeta-hitman-part-i.html> (accessed 21 July 2012).

CARTEL TERRITORIES AND DRUG ROUTES

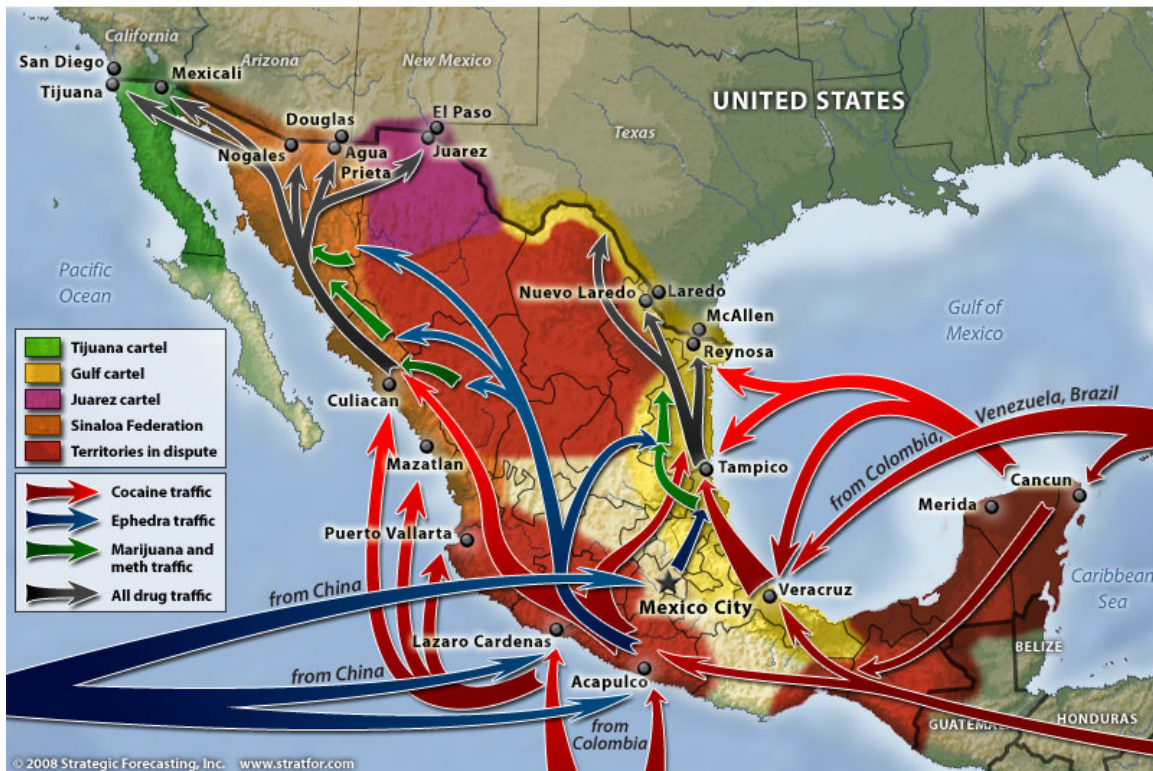


Figure 2. Areas of Cartel Influence with Smuggling Routes.

Source: Fred Burton and Ben West. When the Mexican Drug Trade Hits the Border. Stratfor Global Intelligence (15 April 2009)

http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090415_when_mexican_drug_hits_border (accessed 12 November 2012). Copyright authorization was obtained for this figure from Stratfor Global Intelligence.

Since 2006, Mexico's drug-war related mortality rate has exceeded that of any civil or communal war in Sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East, yet the attention and resources committed to Mexico from the U.S. are minimal, at best.⁵⁴ Mexico has suffered over fifty

⁵⁴Foriegnassistance.gov, which provides U.S. foreign aid statistics from USAID and U.S. Department of State to global partner nations (\$33.9 billion for FY2012), indicates that foreign aid focused on stability and security provided to Mexico was approximately 0.2% of the foreign aid in FY 2012. Contrarily, Sub-Saharan African countries like Somalia received approximately 0.4%, doubling security designated aid to a nation that has little U.S. interests and does not border the U.S. Other countries like Egypt received approximately 3.8%, indicating the level of

thousand deaths (~ 833+ deaths per month spanning over five years) resulting from the activities and actions of drug trafficking organizations.⁵⁵ This exceeds the estimated combat-related deaths in civil war infested countries like Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its leader, Joseph Kony, were responsible for approximately 29,000 less combat related deaths than Mexico's drug war related deaths during the same timeframe.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the methodology of killing also overshadows that of the LRA. For example, "on April 6th [2011] police discovered mass graves near San Fernando, Tamaulipas, near the border with the United States, which so far have yielded 183 bodies. Two weeks later hidden tombs were discovered in the northwestern city of Durango from which one hundred corpses have so far been extracted."⁵⁷ In Tamaulipas, *Los Zetas* killed seventy-two Central and South American migrants on 15 February 2011 for refusing to assist with illicit smuggling activities.⁵⁸ Since 2006, the number of massed killings has continued to rise which correlates to the overall death toll of more than fifty thousand calculated for 2011.⁵⁹

importance that the U.S. places in that country and region. Two categories of study that were emphasized were Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform (\$8.457billion in FY2012) and Counter-Narcotics (\$678million in FY 2012). These categories best summarize the funding allocation to partner nations in order to comply with the National Security Strategy. United States Department of State and USAID. *ForeignAssistance.gov*. 9 December 2012. http://foreignassistance.gov/Agency_DOS.aspx?FY=2012&tabID=tab_sct_Peace_Planned&budTab=tab_Bud_Planned (accessed 9 December 2012).

⁵⁵Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, 2012.

⁵⁶Ploughshares, "Uganda 1987-2010," (1 January 2011) <http://www.ploughshares.ca/content/uganda-1987-2010> (accessed 25 July 2012).

⁵⁷Harper, "Shallow Graves, Deepening Alarm," 2011.

⁵⁸Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristin M. Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, Congressional Research Report (Washington DC: Congress Research Service, 2011), 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid; Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising*

The associated brutality of drug wars in Mexico arguably rivals that of any Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle Eastern, or Far Eastern country. For example, the victims in Tamaulipas were beaten to death by sledgehammers and some burned alive by *Los Zetas*.⁶⁰ Additionally, in the summer of 2010, Mexican authorities discovered seventy-two migrants murdered outside of San Fernando, Tamaulipas.⁶¹ Finally, in March 2011, seven “youths” died because of “suffocation with duct tape...in the formerly quiet city of Cuernavaca.”⁶² The Mexican government claims that these killings were mainly between criminal organizations, illustrating the level of conflict that exists between drug cartels.⁶³ However, the Mexican government fails to mention their role in combating these organizations and the deaths that result. For example, Mexican authorities claimed that they accounted for three hundred out of the 1,720 murders that occurred in Ciudad Juarez in September of 2009.⁶⁴ The three-sided war (cartel versus cartel versus Mexican government) makes the form of conflict in Mexico exceptional with regards to its level of devastation and the brutality of the actor.⁶⁵

The level of brutality is a nasty by-product of the power play between competing DTOs. The size of the drug cartels in Mexico continue to grow at exponential rates and continually

Violence, 2012.

⁶⁰Harper, "Shallow Graves, Deepening Alarm," 2011.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 70.

⁶⁵The components of auxiliary (directly and indirectly supporting DTOs) and underground (the corrupted government officials that build the foundation of a shadow government) are lumped together with the cartels they aid.

jockey for control of the drug-trafficking industry and its associated power and wealth.⁶⁶ Also, cartels appear resilient as one organizational leader, or kingpin, disappears or is captured another one rises to take the position. “La Familia Michoacana, a gang that was virtually destroyed in January [2011], announced its rebirth as the ‘Knights Templar’ in March [2011]. From the ruins of the Beltrán Leyva cartel operating primarily out of the Mexican Central States, which essentially disintegrated last year, have sprung two new upstarts.”⁶⁷ However, the question remains, in a developing country such as Mexico, what facilitates the endless supply of recruits for the cartels? This answer to this question is arguably the key determining factor of the violence in Mexico.

In some respects, the origins of Mexico’s drug war traces its roots back to the days of prohibition and the fulfillment of American desires. Given its geographic location, Mexico has had historical ties as an intermediary staging point for an array of contraband headed for U.S. Long before the enormous market for narcotics, Mexico supplied illegal alcohol to the United States during Prohibition. This carried over into the onset of illegal drug trade with the U.S. after the prohibition ended in 1933.⁶⁸ Many drugs outlawed today were legal in the U.S. in the 1930s, but the U.S. government has since deemed them illegal in the 1970s via the Controlled Substance

⁶⁶I say “so-called” because formally, a cartel is an arrangement where firms, or countries or other types of organizations such as these drug trafficking operations in Mexico collude to exact monopoly pricing power in the market; for example, OPEC is a cartel. However, the primary difference is that these “so-called” cartels in Mexico are at “war” with one another, or at least some are at “war” with each other.

⁶⁷Harper, "Shallow Graves, Deepening Alarm," 2011; The DTO areas of influence are derived from the following source: Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of Rising Violence*, 2012, 7.

⁶⁸Ed Vulliamy, *Amexica: War along the Borderline* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010), 23; Harper, "Shallow Graves, Deepening Alarm," 2011.

Act.⁶⁹ At the end of the 1960s, the Mexican narcotics smugglers started to smuggle hard and soft drugs on a massive scale.⁷⁰ However, as the business of narco-trafficking grew, so did the cartels' need for manpower, making recruitment another major element of DTOs.

Recruiting typically thrives in areas that have a large proportion of young, uneducated, jobless males, which facilitates a viable area to fulfill recruiting necessities.⁷¹ Approximately nineteen percent of the Mexican population from 2005-12 earned less than two U.S. dollars per day (see Table 1). Furthermore, the average Mexican citizen over the age of twenty-five averages eight years of education compared to the United States' 12.3 years (see Table 2). Even though 2011 U3 unemployment for Mexico was only 5.2 percent, their underemployment exceeded twenty-five percent, highlighting that a large portion of Mexican citizens live below the poverty line.⁷² Paul Collier's violent recruitment pool profile seems to hold true even amongst non-

⁶⁹Controlled Substance Act of 1970 outlawed controlled substances based upon Congressional findings and concerns with drug usage, particularly marijuana, highlighted during the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The findings led to the banding of illegal drugs and Nixon's war on Drugs in 1972. The act is continually updated to reflect new and developing drugs. United States Code 21, Chapter 13 - Drug Abuse Prevention and Control, <http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/21C13.txt> (accessed 16 November 2012).

⁷⁰Vulliamy, *Amexica: War along the Borderline*, 2010, 23.

⁷¹World Bank, "Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy," 68.

⁷²United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Mexico," *CIA Fact Book* <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html> (accessed 23 July 2012); U3 unemployment rating is the official unemployment rating, "which is the proportion of the civilian labor force that is unemployed but actively seeking employment." Seeking employment includes the following categories: "Contacting, sending out resumes or filling out applications, placing or answering advertisements, checking union or professional registers, and some other means of active job search." Finally, the active labor force includes "persons under 16 years of age, all persons confined to institutions such as nursing homes and prisons, and persons on active duty in the Armed Forces. The labor force is made up of the employed and the unemployed. The remainder—those who have no job and are not looking for one—are counted as "not in the labor force." Many who are not in the labor force are going to school or are retired." Portal Seven, "Unemployment Rate," http://portalseven.com/employment/unemployment_rate.jsp (accessed 09 April 2013).

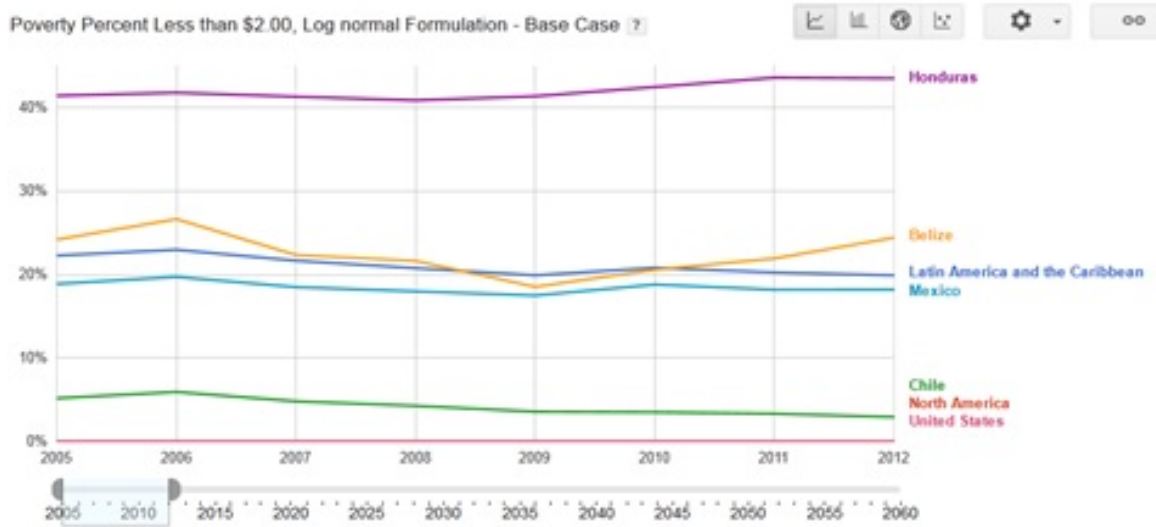
traditional wars like Mexico's drug war. Finally, an area where there are vast quantities of displaced persons and violence is the norm facilitates coercive methods of filling the ranks, making it that much easier due to lack of order and security. In 2011, the number of internally displaced persons (IDP) in Mexico began to climb. The increased level of violence due to the Mexican governments direct militant approach to combat drug cartels in 2007 "displaced tens of thousands of people, mostly in the states of Chihuahua, Tamaulipas and Nuevo León on the northern border with the USA, and also in Durango, Guerrero, Sinaloa and Michoacán" (See Figure 3).⁷³ Furthermore, approximately two hundred thousand people left Ciudad Juarez from mid-2008-10 due to "economic recession, but much more so because of the soaring violence."⁷⁴ All of these factors seem to exacerbate the drug war in Mexico by providing an endless pool of recruits perpetuated by displacement, low-income, minimal education, and disenfranchised members of Mexican society.⁷⁵

⁷³Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC), "Mexico: Displacement Due to Criminal and Communal Violence," <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/mexico> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁷⁴Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 123.

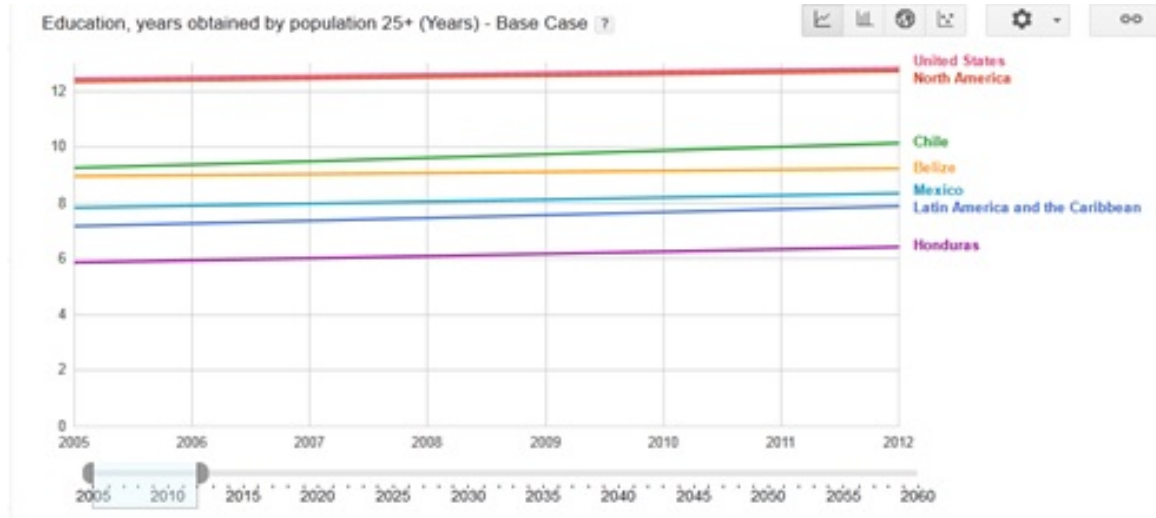
⁷⁵United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Mexico," 2012.

Table 1. Percent population that earns less than US\$2 per day.



Source: Created by author using Google: Public Data. n.d.
<http://www.google.com/publicdata/directory> (accessed 26 July 2012). Copyrights are not required because material was on public domain.

Table 2. Regional Education Rates (years in school) for 25+ Years of Age.



Source: Created by author using Google: Public Data. n.d.
<http://www.google.com/publicdata/directory> (accessed 26 July 2012). Copyrights are not required because material was on public domain.



Figure 2. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Mexico as of November 2011.

Source: Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC), “Mexico: Displacement Due to Criminal and Communal Violence.” (November 2011) [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/%28httpInfoFiles%29/8AC99B5FCA60635CC12579530055E136/\\$file/IDMC_Mexico_Nov2011.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/%28httpInfoFiles%29/8AC99B5FCA60635CC12579530055E136/$file/IDMC_Mexico_Nov2011.pdf) (accessed 26 July 2012). Copyrights are not required because material was on public domain.

Even though the government has attempted to counter the drug cartels, their efforts are fleeting. As previously mentioned, the level of weaponry that drug cartels possess is far superior to the firepower of local Mexican police. Cartels are now in possession of Surface to Air Soviet era rocket launchers capable of destroying the Mexican SWAT armored vehicles. On 20 October 2012, the local SWAT violently encountered a cartel gunman in the border city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila. Once the small arms fight halted and police searched the gunman’s stolen car, they discovered that he “had been in possession of an arsenal of weapons that included three Soviet-made antitank rockets complete with an RPG [rocket propelled grenade]-7 shoulder-fired

launcher.”⁷⁶ This is one of many examples that serve as evident to the local police forces in Mexico that they are potentially being out-gunned. The security situation becomes even more complicated as local governments and municipalities contract private security companies and armed bands as a means to counter the cartels increasing level of firepower.

The following example illustrates the convolution in Mexico’s security capably as the ability to provide order is broken at the local level due to corruption.

In 2008, the municipal president of Aguascalientes hired the State Police Intelligence Corps (CIPOL) to help combat the increasing violence. Founded in 2005 in the state of Chihuahua by one-time local politician and public security chief Raúl Grajeda Domínguez and Jesús Manuel García Salcido, the former head of Chihuahua’s municipal police, CIPOL has a murky, quasi-governmental status. Despite its ties to the Chihuahua state government, CIPOL behaves like a private police force, even driving its own distinctive red-and-white patrol cruisers. When CIPOL arrived in Aguascalientes, the mayor as the municipal chief of police quickly appointed García Salcido. His tenure was short. In August 2009, agents from the federal attorney general’s Office arrested him for the Specialized Investigation of Organized Crime (SIEDO) for supposed ties to drug cartels. Charges that CIPOL overcharged Aguascalientes for equipment, including the purchase of a helicopter, were also raised. His trial is pending.⁷⁷

Unfortunately, examples of corruption and bribery are extremely common in Mexico because they are intricately vital aspects of the narco-trafficking business. The business of drug trafficking cannot survive without the support it receives from local officials and security forces because it limits the resistance and facilitates their ability to adaptive through intelligence gathering. Cartels thrive from their ability to adjust their tactics in order to facilitate finical growth, and it is because of this economic status they are capable of wielding power and

⁷⁶Ioan Grillo, "Mexico’s Drug Lords Ramp Up Their Arsenals with RPGs," *World.time.com* (25 October 2012) <http://world.time.com/2012/10/25/mexicos-drug-lords-ramp-up-their-arsenals-with-rpgs/> (accessed 19 November 2012).

⁷⁷Keller and Pipitone, “Inside Mexico’s Drug War,” 2010.

inflicting terror as they please.⁷⁸ In fact, “a member of President Calderon’s personal and permanent bodyguard [was] arrested and charged for being” employed by the Beltrán Leyya brothers’ cartel and passing secrets about presidential policies and strategies.⁷⁹ The individuals that passed this vital information allowed cartels to stay one step ahead of security forces and governmental policies aimed at harming the narco-trafficking business. Moreover, ethical and legal governmental policies are continually contorted in order to contribute to the trafficking of illegal drugs, thus helping to fund the drug war. For example, the *plata o plomo* tactic forces cooperation from political figures, influential business persons, governmental officials, and even governmental security forces.⁸⁰ These *cooperating officials* then implement policies or simply overlook laws that facilitate or harm cartel business. A 2007 U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), uncovered the governors of two Mexican states, Veracruz and Michoacán, collaborating with cartels. Ted Carpenter notes an example of this in his book, *The Fire Next Door*, when he recounts how “Veracruz governor Fidel Herrera allegedly allowed the cartel to secure a trafficking route through the drug state, and Michoacán governor Lázaro Cardenas Batal supposedly gave the cartel free rein to control a key port and to collect a ‘tax’ on drug shipments for other cartels.”⁸¹ Although these are intentional laws being broken and local policies being

⁷⁸Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 87. The global drug trade is estimated to be nearly 320 billion dollars per year. Mexican cartels are thought to control somewhere between nine and nineteen percent of that market, giving them substantial amounts of wealth to conduct business as they see fit.

⁷⁹Vulliamy, *Amexica: War along the Borderline*, 2010, 14.

⁸⁰The *plata o plomo* (silver or lead) tactic entails that a person accept the offer to cooperate with the cartels or they, possibility even their family, receive a bullet in return. Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 94-5; William Finnegan, "Silver or Lead," *The New Yorker* (31 May 2010) http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/05/31/100531fa_fact_finnegan (accessed 13 January 2013).

⁸¹Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 90.

implemented, there are also legitimate policies and laws that inadvertently assist cartel narco-trafficking business and the violence that it exudes.

The institutionalization of laws, regulations, and policies are designed to establish and maintain order within a state. However, some Mexican and United States' internal policies seem to facilitate cartels and their business operations. A Congressional Research Service report for Congress and the Office of National Drug Control Policy approximates that "60% of cartel profit is estimated to come from the trafficking and sale of Marijuana."⁸² Although the RAND Corporation disputes this percentage of profits, some scholars like Thomas Friedman and Ted Carpenter suggests that if the U.S. were to legalize marijuana then it "could undercut illegal marijuana from Mexico and force the cartels out of the market through competition."⁸³ Cartels incur overhead costs due to the illicit nature of their business. According to Matthew Van Horen, an Economics student at the University of Queensland, "the cartels' comparative advantage is in criminal activity, not the production of an (illicit) agricultural commodity."⁸⁴ Basically, if say marijuana were legalized, there would be restrictions on supply and this would lead to a sharp decrease in prices, and revenues for producers, driving profitability down to more "normal" levels, that is, to the average rate of return on capital across the economy which undercuts cartels' abilities to sustain illegal trafficking of sixty percent of their profit margins. Van Horen continues by pointing out that "although undercutting the marijuana market in and of itself will not collapse the cartels, the severely diminished profit margins reaped by the drug gangs will limit their

⁸²Mathew Van Horen, "Developing Strategies to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels," *Matters of Consequence* (3 March 2011) <http://foreword.com.au/2011/10/developing-strategies-to-defeat-mexicos-drug-cartels/> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁸³Ibid; Beau Kilmer, Jonathan P. Caulkins, Brittany M. Bond, and Peter H. Reuter, *Reducing Drug Trafficking Revenues and Violence in Mexico: Would Legalizing Marijuana in California Help?* International Programs and Drug Policy Research Center: Occasional Paper (Arlington: RAND Corporation, 2010), 27-32.

⁸⁴Van Horen, "Developing Strategies to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels," 2011.

operational ability, making them more vulnerable to methods previously mentioned.”⁸⁵ Therefore, the policy of retaining the illegal status of marijuana actually works in the favor of drug cartels by facilitating their monopoly on criminal activity of drug trafficking.

A second policy that aids in the cause of the drug related conflict is the U.S. restrictions on assault rifles. Certain states and cities go out of the way to regulate arms, especially in California where a registered gun owner is limited to a pistol with no more than ten rounds per magazine.⁸⁶ By limiting the supply and easy access to weapons in the U.S., the cartels are forced to look elsewhere for fully automatic weapons in countries where regulations are not so stringent and the level of weaponry is only limited to the cost. Therefore, the cartels are now exposed to a third category of weapons that range from grenades to rocket launchers from countries like China, which would not have occurred if U.S. current gun policies were not so narrowly focused on domestic gun control.⁸⁷ Van Horen concludes by stating that “instead of focusing on stemming the flow of assault weapons coming from the United States, the US government should attempt to work with Chinese and South American authorities to impede illicit military-grade arms smuggling rackets which are bolstering the cartels’ militant capabilities.”⁸⁸

The amount of contributing elements continues to compound as the cartels gain more power. However, three of the primary factors that contribute to recent rise of drug cartels and the conflict they produce are “preexisting corruption, the inability of weak law enforcement

⁸⁵Van Horen, “Developing Strategies to Defeat Mexico’s Drug Cartels,” 2011.

⁸⁶The State of California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms, “California Firearms Laws 2007” <http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/pdfs/firearms/forms/Cfl2007.pdf>? (accessed 31 December 2012).

⁸⁷Scott Stewart, “Mexico’s Gun Supply and the 90 Percent Myth.” *Stratfor Global Intelligence* (10 February 2011) <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110209-mexicos-gun-supply-and-90-percent-myth> (accessed 31 December 2012).

⁸⁸Van Horen, “Developing Strategies to Defeat Mexico’s Drug Cartels,” 2011.

institutions to counter them, and the demand for illegal drugs in the United States.”⁸⁹

Nevertheless, the devastation manifesting from the conflict is, by far, the more disturbing aspect of the Mexican drug wars and one that should grab the attention of policy makers around the world because of the associated economic and social costs.

Viridiana Rios of the Harvard Department of Government estimates that “the [economic] cost of violence in Mexico is equivalent to US\$1.07 billion, investment losses accounts for another US\$1.3 billion, drug abuse generates a loss of US\$0.68 billion, and other costs may have an impact as high as US\$1.5 billion.”⁹⁰ During periods of conflict, companies will look to move their businesses out of the conflict area in order to continue operations. Corporations that are interested in establishing business in a country that is experiencing conflict will most likely look elsewhere to avoid the conflict. Understanding that there is a high possibility for future conflict, corporations may be dissuaded from investing in conflict countries in the future as well. Yet, according to the U.S. State Department, over eighteen thousand companies with U.S. investment have operations in Mexico. These companies have invested over 145 billion U.S. dollars in Mexico since 2000.⁹¹ Unfortunately, many businesses in Mexico rely on private security companies to escort employees as a means of avoiding the violence between drug cartels and drug cartels and the government sponsored security forces. Additionally, some businesses need to

⁸⁹Robert C. Bonner, “The New Cocaine Cowboys: How to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2010) <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66472/robert-c-bonner/the-new-cocaine-cowboys> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁹⁰Viridiana Rios and David A. Shirk, “Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis through 2010” (Trans-Border Institute, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego, 15 February 2011) <http://justiceinmexico.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/2011-tbi-drugviolence4.pdf> (accessed 23 July 2012).

⁹¹Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Fact Sheet, “U.S. Relations with Mexico” (Washington DC: The United States Department of State, 25 June 2012) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35749.htm> (accessed 9 October 2012).

factor in payments to local crime organizations in order to transport their good throughout specific areas of Mexico.⁹² Due to these security concerns, only half of the U.S. firms recently surveyed by the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce have said that they will continue with investment plans in Mexico.⁹³

A state could experience capital flight because of conflict. During periods of conflict, capital flight increases from nine percent of private wealth to twenty percent.⁹⁴ At the end of the first decade after the conflict, capital flight rises to over twenty-six percent.⁹⁵ Investors want to make sure that their money will not be lost during the conflict and therefore look to move it to overseas banking institutions. According to data from BBVA Bancomer, the largest financial group that operates in Mexico, a total of 50 billion U.S. dollars of foreign capital invested in shares of Mexican companies and government bonds fled the country in 2009.⁹⁶

Services, including tourism, are a major component of Mexico's gross domestic product

⁹²Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Fact Sheet, "U.S. Relations with Mexico," 2012.

⁹³Associated Press, "Cartel Violence Deterring U.S. Businesses from Opening in Mexico," *FoxNews.com* (16 May 2011) <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/05/15/businesses-reluctant-open-mexico-373481421/> (accessed 24 July 2012).

⁹⁴Capital flight is defined as "the classic use of the term is to describe widespread currency speculation, especially when it leads to cross-border movements of private funds that are large enough to affect national financial markets. The distinction between "flight" and normal capital outflows is thus a matter of degree, much like the difference between a "bank run" and normal withdrawals. The most common cause of capital flight is an anticipated devaluation of the home currency. No one wants to be caught holding assets that lose 20 or 30 percent of their value overnight, so everyone tries to buy gold or foreign currency. These episodes are usually short-lived, as the so-called "hot money" returns after the devaluation." Darryl McLeod, "Capital Flight," *The Library of Economics and Liberty* (2002) <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/CapitalFlight.html> (accessed 09 April 2013).

⁹⁵Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion. Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.

⁹⁶People's World Website, "Mexico Faces Foreign Capital Flight" (13 February 2009) <http://www.peoplesworld.org/mexico-faces-foreign-capital-flight/> (accessed 9 October 2012).

(GDP) at approximately 6.2 percent of the total GDP.⁹⁷ Specifically, tourism represents approximately 5.4 percent of the total employment in Mexico. The increase in violence in Mexico is a major concern of potential visitors to the country. Increased violence over the last decade has dramatically decreased the desire to travel to Mexico and spend money there. *World Focus*, an international news organization, reported that in 2005 over four million people visited Tijuana as compared to only four hundred thousand in 2008.⁹⁸ This is an enormous downturn in tourists' revenue for Mexico and marks potential degradation in foreign relations as neighboring and international nations if interactions continue to decline.

To make things worse, the detrimental costs of illicit drug activities do not limit themselves to the containment of Mexico. The drug war conflict has effects throughout North America, with a heavy impact on the United States. Mexico is one of the largest trade partners of the United States. The U.S. economy is nearly indistinguishable from Mexico in terms of exportation, importation, and direct foreign investments. Johnny M. Lairsey Jr. of the U.S. Army North, the Army Service Component Command to U.S. Northern Command notes that "the United States consumes approximately eighty percent of Mexico's exports which represents approximately ten percent of total United States imports. Simultaneously, about fourteen percent of total United States exports are sent to Mexico."⁹⁹ Although Mexico is one of the United States top trading partners, it is also one of the top three sources of imported oil to the United States.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Mexico," 2012.

⁹⁸Don Bauder, "Tijuana Tailspin Hurting San Diego?" *The San Diego Reader* (12 August 2009) <http://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2009/aug/12/tijuana-tailspin-hurting-san-diego/> (accessed 24 July 2012).

⁹⁹Johnny M. Lairsey Jr., "A Strategy for Mexico?" *Small Wars Journal* (10 June 2011): 1-7, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/a-strategy-for-mexico> (accessed 4 January 2013).

¹⁰⁰United States Department of Energy, "Petroleum and Other Liquids: Company Level Imports," *U.S. Energy Information Administration* (28 December 2012)

Forty percent of Mexico's GDP comes from oil exports to the U.S. Therefore, Mexico plays an extremely important role in the U.S. economy and vice versa. Decreased or interrupted production of oil due to the conflict in Mexico could have a tremendous impact on the U.S. economy, as well as become increasingly risky for direct foreign investors from the U.S., who have more 11 billion U.S. dollars intertwined with the Mexican economy.¹⁰¹ Potentially, this threat alone could justify the United States government's use of a more aggressive means in order to assist the Mexican government in ending the conflict, thus, protecting U.S. national economic vital interests in the region.

The human social costs of conflict in Mexico often revolve around the conflict between government forces and the drug cartels of Mexico. Unfortunately, civilians are often the victims, caught in the middle of these clashes. According to a database offered by the government, the 15,273 violent deaths marked 2010 as the deadliest year since President Felipe Calderon launched a direct, militarized attack on the drug cartels in late 2006.¹⁰² The daily newspaper *Reforma*, further reported that over twelve thousand killings had resulted from the conflicts between government forces and the drug cartels in 2011. According to the *Reforma* newspaper, there has also been an increase in the number of cases of torture and beheadings reached almost 600, up from 389 in the prior year.¹⁰³ The *Reforma* also found that "women increasingly were victims of

<http://www.eia.gov/petroleum/imports/companylevel/> (accessed 1 January 2013); Lairsey, "A Strategy for Mexico?," 2011.

¹⁰¹Lairsey, "A Strategy for Mexico?," 2011.

¹⁰²Tim Johnson, "Is Mexico at war? Conflict Prompt Linguistic Debate," *McClatchy Newspapers* (2 February 2011) <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/02/03/108056/is-mexico-at-war-conflict-prompts.html> (accessed 23 July 2012).

¹⁰³William Booth, "In Mexico, 12,000 Killed in Drug Violence in 2011," *The Washington Post*, (2 January 2012) http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-mexico-12000-killed-in-drug-violence-in-2011/2012/01/02/gIQAcGUdWP_story.html (accessed 23 July 2012).

drug violence, with more than 900 slain last year.”¹⁰⁴ Figure 4 graphically demonstrates the increase in drug-related killings from 2008-10.

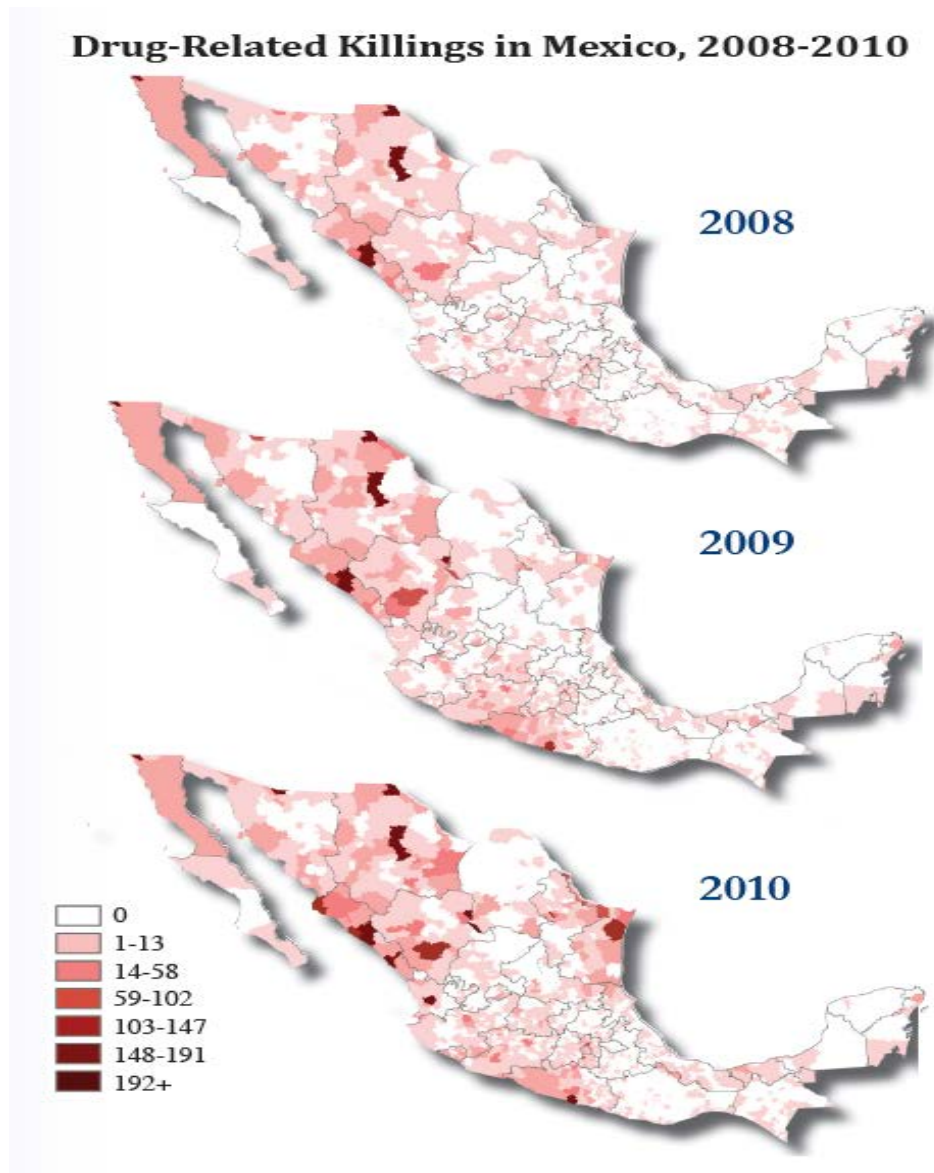


Figure 3. Drug-Related Killings in Mexico from 2008-10.

Source: Rios and Shirk, "Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis through 2010," 2011, 1, 10. Copyright authorization obtained from the source origination.

¹⁰⁴Booth, "In Mexico, 12,000 Killed in Drug Violence in 2011," 2012.

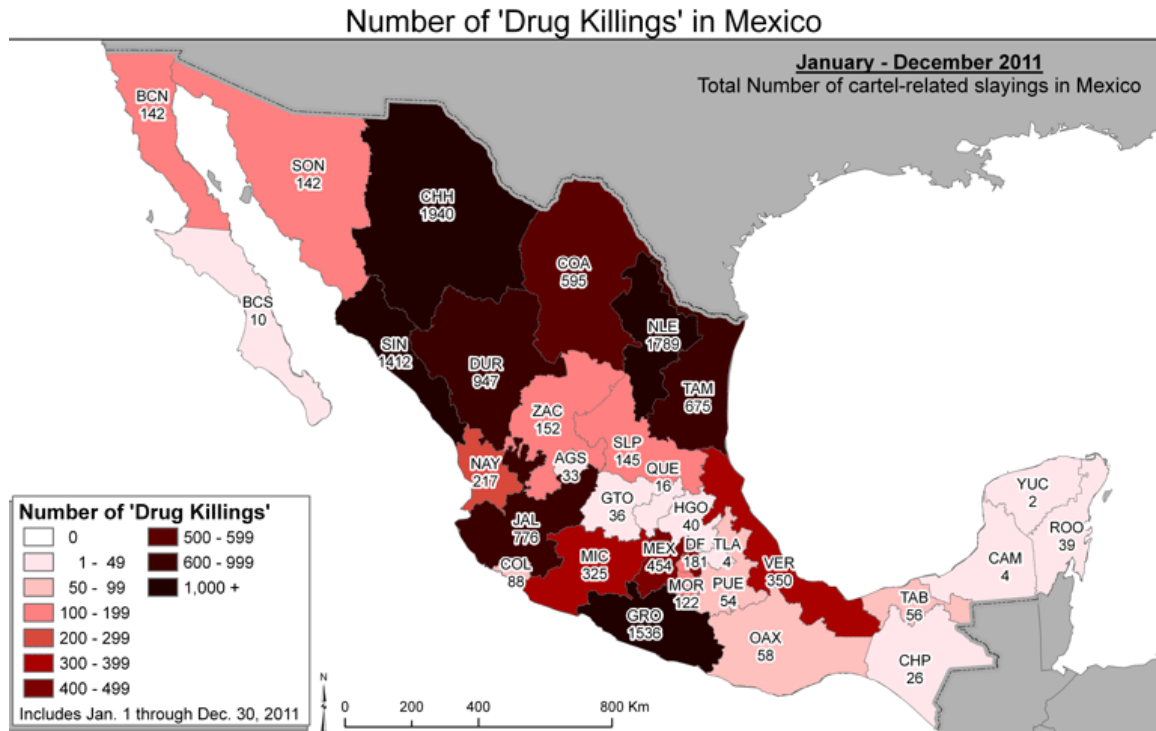


Figure 4. 2011 Drug-Related Killings by state in Mexico.

Source: Rios and Shirk, "Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis through 2010," 2011, 10. Copyright authorization obtained from the source origination.

As violence in Mexico has increased, so has the number of Mexican citizens seeking asylum. A growing number of citizens have sought refuge in the United States to escape death threats from drug traffickers as well as the deadly interactions between government forces and the cartels. In the 2008 fiscal year, immigration judges approved 250 Mexican asylum petitions, compared with 153 the previous year and 133 in 2006 — the year the war on drugs was launched by President Calderón.¹⁰⁵ Even though the numbers are small in comparison to the rate of illegal immigration from Mexico to the U.S., this is an indicator of the growing contribution violence

¹⁰⁵Chardy Alfonso, "Fleeing Violence, More Mexicans Seek U.S. Asylum," *McClatchy Newspapers* (4 April 2010) <http://www.statesman.com/news/world/fleeing-violence-more-mexicans-seek-u-s-asylum-522710.html> (accessed 25 July 2012).

has in Mexico and the ability to influence migration patterns in Mexico. In fact, “municipal leaders in El Paso, [TX] estimate that at least 30,000 Mexicans, primarily middle-class people, have moved across the border in the past three years [2008 to 2011] to find a safe haven from the violence.”¹⁰⁶

To further illustrate this point on violence in Mexico and the influence it has on migration, one can examine the conflict in the state of Chiapas between the Mexican government and the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or the Zapatistas. It “began in 1994 when the Zapatistas demanded that the Mexican government address the poverty conditions among the indigenous population.”¹⁰⁷ Cartels used this economic disparity to their advantage by injecting money into the area and forcing the local populace to work for the DTOs because the government was unable to provide goods and services to the people. Social polarization and dissatisfaction of the local citizenry led to an increase of armed conflicts over minor disputes from land tenure, religion, and other issues which eventually forced an additional displacement of more than 16,000 Chiapanecan citizens.¹⁰⁸ Further intra-community division has produced villages with “separate governments, clinics, schools, and justice systems, and other services for adherents of the separate factions operate.”¹⁰⁹ The chronic interparty and intra-communal conflict in Chiapas also created some disturbing social costs with regards to health concerns as well.

A study completed by the *American Journal of Public Health* describes “the prevalence of malnutrition in children aged younger than [five] years in the [three] Chiapanecan regions most

¹⁰⁶Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 128.

¹⁰⁷H. J. Sanchez-Perez, et al., "Malnutrition among Children Younger than 5 Years-Old in Conflict Zones of Chiapas, Mexico," *American Journal of Public Health* (February 2007): 229-232, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1781381/> (accessed 23 July 2012).

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

adversely affected by the Zapatista conflict and its association with various socioeconomic and conflict-related factors.”¹¹⁰ The results of the study concluded that children under the age of five in the Chiapas State were stunted in their educational development as well as malnourishment than children of the same relative age group in war torn Afghanistan.¹¹¹ A study from the *American Journal of Public Health* concluded that communal divides and intercommunity conflict tend to “decrease access to food and increase vulnerability to infectious diseases” through perpetual violence and social tensions, which can potentially lead to a degradation of “cultivation and marketing of crops; maternal stress may diminish breast milk production; and religious or political discrimination may impede access to health services.”¹¹²

The psychological effects of conflict are another and often unseen social cost of conflict perpetuated by violence. As stated previously, drug cartel violence claimed more than 50,000 lives between 2006 and 2011, either directly or indirectly affecting families, friends, and non-associated witnesses. For example, in Veracruz, just north of Chiapas, passing pedestrians observed thirty-five drug cartel victims piled beneath a bridge. Many of these victims and

¹¹⁰“The final sample included 21 government-aligned communities, 6 opposition-aligned communities, and 19 communities divided by political-party affiliation (government versus Zapatista-aligned). Four of the government-aligned communities were internally divided by religious or intraparty differences. We identified 2838 children aged younger than 5 years from 1779 households (20 households declined to participate).” Sanchez-Perez, et al., “Malnutrition among Children Younger than 5 Years-Old in Conflict Zones of Chiapas, Mexico,” 2007.

¹¹¹“The overall prevalence of stunting observed was substantially greater than that reported by the Mexican National Nutritional Survey (17.8% nationally; 29.2% in Chiapas State) and was consistent with observations from other surveys performed in Chiapas during the Zapatista conflict. In fact, the prevalence of stunting present in the children we examined resembled that in child residents of conflict zones in Afghanistan and Angola (63.7% and 57.3%, respectively) more than it did that in children in northern Mexico (7.1%). Such high levels of malnutrition place these children at higher risk for diminished school and work performance, as well as mortality.” Sanchez-Perez, et al., “Malnutrition among Children Younger than 5 Years-Old in Conflict Zones of Chiapas, Mexico,” 2007.

¹¹²Ibid.

witnesses do not have access to psychologists, psychiatrists, or social workers which makes it difficult to obtain accurate statistics of the number of people affected by the psychological trauma of conflict. Many of these people continue to live in fear after the trauma and do not receive treatment for their condition. Recently, teams of psychologists have been attending to thousands of civilians that are suffering from stress and anxiety in Mexico. Victims of violence in the country, as well as witnesses of the violence, have been displaying symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). *The Daily News*, a South African newspaper, reports “in the northern state of Nuevo Leon, the public health sector is attending to over 3,000 people, including 1,000 children, for psychological problems due to the violence that has been witnessed throughout the state.”¹¹³ After witnessing the various types of violence and conflict, people will often live with nervousness, irritability, and suffer from insomnia. Many of the residents of Nuevo León have completely changed their lives in order to survive the daily conflict and acts of terror stemming from cartel illicit activities.¹¹⁴

Mexico’s drug war and the violent activities of DTOs do not limit themselves to only threat the economic interests of its regional neighbors. The ongoing physical violence in Mexico also spills over across the border into the United States. The porous nature of the border between the United States and Mexico makes it easy for cartel members to move fluidly back to the United States if needed. In fact, Mexican DTOs have direct connections to criminal gangs in more than 230 U.S. cities, including all fifty major U.S. cities. Carpenter states that “unlike the Colombian cartels from the past, Mexican cartels are more vertically integrated – from growing

¹¹³All of the previous information in this paragraph derives from a single source. Sapa-dpa, “Psychologists combat effect of violence in Mexico,” *The Daily News* (8 October 2011) <http://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/opinion/psychologists-combat-effects-of-violence-in-mexico-1.1151653#.UAtEiPVajFd> (accessed 23 July 2012).

¹¹⁴Sapa-dpa, “Psychologists combat effect of violence in Mexico,” 2011.

their own marijuana [and other drugs] to selling it on U.S. streets.”¹¹⁵ DEA estimates that Mexican cartels control approximately seventy percent of United States drug trade and continues to grow at a rapid pace.¹¹⁶ As a result, turf battles and corruption follow suit.

As the violence in Mexico continues and expands into the United States, so does the violent competition over turf. As Mexican illegal drug competition continues to grow the potentially for proxy wars in U.S. communities becomes more of a reality. Evidence exists suggesting that Mexican DTO turf wars on U.S. soil have already begun and are accelerating. Carpenter points out at least three cases where “members of La Familia kidnapped competing drug dealers in Houston and held them for ransom. Similar events have occurred in Phoenix, Las Vegas, and other U.S. cities,” like Atlanta, “a strategic operations center for Mexican organized crime.”¹¹⁷ Additionally, the turf battles are increasing in their overt natures as well, indicating that cartels have little to no respect for U.S. law enforcement. For example, cartels assassinated a lieutenant from competing cartels in broad daylight in an upscale neighborhood in El Paso, TX. DTO members also openly placed a one million dollar bounty on an Arizona sheriff, engaged in an open gun battle in front of El Paso city hall in 2010, and repeatedly murder U.S. ranchers like Robert Krentz in March 2010 along the border.¹¹⁸

Corruption is another spillover effect that stems from DTO illicit activities. Carpenter highlights that Americans and their governmental officials have historical smugly observed and

¹¹⁵Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 176.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷The quote reference Atlanta being Mexican DTO strategic operations center was stated by Rodney D. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA’s Atlanta office. He continues by saying that “Mexican traffickers were ‘able to blend right in and establish metro Atlanta as that strategic trans-shipment point.’” Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 176-77.

¹¹⁸Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 10-11.

denounced the Mexican government's ability to counter corruption within its borders.¹¹⁹ However, recent evidence has proven that Mexico's problem is now the United States' issues as well. An Associated Press released indicated that "in August 2009, more than [eighty] law enforcement officers at the local, state, and federal levels working along the border had already been convicted for drug-related corruption charges since late 2006." Additionally, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency self-reported a post 9-11 hiring surge opened the door for cartel members to easily infiltrate the agency which created a rash of arrests and convictions for corruption totaling 770 in 2010 alone.¹²⁰ Cartel members that infiltrated the CBP began to branch out and corrupted other U.S. government agencies like a cancer. Charles Edwards, acting Inspector General (IG) for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) testified before a congressional sub-committee in June of 2011, "that his office had 267 active investigations" within the DHS.¹²¹ As a result, Senator David Pryor (D-AR), chairman of the Senate subcommittee on homeland security, noted that the congressional concern is growing because with more than "[fifty] percent of the nation's methamphetamine and marijuana coming through Mexico and about [ninety] percent of the cocaine, there is a huge financial incentive for cartels to try to corrupt our people."¹²²

A third major regional spillover stemming from Mexico's internal drug war centers on the very controversial topic of illegal immigration. The United States is already experiencing a large volume of illegal immigrants crossing the border from Mexico, and although it has leveled off compared to the rate of growth for illegal immigration in recent years, the cumulative number

¹¹⁹Ibid., 177.

¹²⁰Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 179-81.

¹²¹Ibid., 182.

¹²²Ibid.

remains high. According to 2010 statistics, there were approximately 140,000 IDPs within Mexico due to drug related violence and since Mexico currently has no IDP camps established, they are displaced internally or to neighboring countries.¹²³ Mexico has the largest immigration rate in the world and the majority of the persons immigrate to the U.S. In 2007, more than 560,000 Mexican nationals made their way to the U.S. in search for a safer and more secure life. In fact, “one out of every three immigrants to the United States is of Mexican descent, adding up to a total of 11.6 million Mexican immigrants living in the United States.”¹²⁴ Logic dictates that illegal immigration increases with increased internal violence, as previously noted, and the United States could experience an even larger movement of people into the U.S. to avoid this conflict. Along with mass refugee immigration, the United States could experience health problem and diseases that the country is not prepared to combat. The drain on resources such as hospitals and health care centers due to a mass immigration would directly impact the citizens of the U.S. Additionally, IDP camps may also need to be established in order to house and feed the influx of people from Mexico. Although assistance from the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) typically funds issues like this, there are always associated costs, such land allocation, logistics, and security.

The drug war in Mexico also produces international level spillage. The reduction of manufacturing and production due to conflict or the threat of conflict directly is another wide spreading cost that impacts the global community through decreased trade. A slowdown in Mexico's main exports of oil, manufactured goods, fruits, vegetables, and coffee could have an

¹²³Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC), “Mexico: Displacement Due to Criminal and Communal Violence,” 2012.

¹²⁴Lara Talsma, *Human Trafficking in Mexico and Neighbouring Countries: A Review of Protection Approaches*. Research Paper No. 229 (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2012), 7.

undetermined effect on world prices.¹²⁵ The effect on world prices, realistically, may only have a slight effect because these goods would be transitory as the production increase in other countries offsets the Mexican output.¹²⁶ However, the seam created from a declining Mexican economy could open to door for transnational terrorist organizations to exploit. Furthermore, any decrease of conventional economic opportunities could further create an environment which welcomes illegal opportunity in Mexico. Terrorist organizations thrive in countries that are in turmoil and where the government lacks control; look at safe haven example in countries like Somalia or Pakistan for example. These organizations can plan and rehearse terrorist activities unmolested in conflict countries due to government resources focusing solely on internal issues. Hypothetically, terrorist operations could launch their activities into North America due to Mexico's inability to control the illicit activities of DTOs. Additionally and arguably more concerning, the ongoing conflict in Mexico has not halted the cultivation, manufacturing, transportation, and distribution of illegal drugs throughout the world, which has been discussed earlier and is the entire premise for resource allocation to counter illegal drug trafficking as noted by President Nixon's War on Drug campaign initiated in 1971.¹²⁷

As Collier has stated, failing or failed countries torn by conflict cultivate and manufacture ninety-five percent of the global production of hard drugs.¹²⁸ Although Mexico is neither a bottom billion country nor a failing state, it is constantly engaged in conflict which has the

¹²⁵United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Mexico," 2012.

¹²⁶Richard Lynn Ground, "Rent-Seeking and Economic Activities, Income Distribution, and Collective Welfare," Information Paper and Lecture for Global and International Studies 750: Conflict and Development course (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2012).

¹²⁷National Public Radio (NPR), "Timeline: America's War on Drugs," (2 April 2007) <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyID=9252490> (accessed 13 January 2013).

¹²⁸Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*, A World Bank Policy Research Report (Washington, DC: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31.

potentiality to degrade long term productivity.¹²⁹ The international community, and especially the U.S., cannot afford to allow Mexico to fail when it is very possible that the conflict it now faces could escalate and impact its growth in greater ways. The U.S. and the international community must continue to develop a strategy that supports Mexico in an effort to end the current conflict in order to ensure Mexico's future prosperity. Additionally, Mexico has a responsibility to its neighbors and the international community to create a working strategy that combats its internal violence and prevents spillover from increasing to unmanageable levels.

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

Adam Smith, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton all articulated the importance of having free trade between states and its necessity for the development of a strong nation.¹³⁰ Thus, making

¹²⁹Mexico has been doing rather well in terms of economic policies and performance, with the exception of 2009, during the world economic downturn. The IMF actually observed that Mexico's performance under the Flexible Credit Line arrangement was improving as noted in December 2011. Mr. David Lipton, First Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chairman of the Board for the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), commented on the board findings by stating that "Mexico's rapid rebound from the global crisis and the resilience of economic activity in recent months bear witness to Mexico's sound fundamentals and skillful policy management. The strong policy track record and frameworks, including a balanced-budget rule, a credible inflation targeting regime, and prudent financial oversight, have underpinned sound public and private balance sheets....The authorities are committed to rebuilding policy buffers gradually in light of heightened global risks. Fiscal consolidation and supportive monetary policy are poised to be maintained, while the increase in external buffers is being complemented by the FCL arrangement. The floating exchange rate regime will continue to play a key role in buffering external shocks....Downside risks to Mexico's near-term outlook arise from unsettled global growth prospects and the turbulence in international financial markets. However, Mexico retains policy space to contain the potential fallout from external shocks, supported by the FCL arrangement, and the authorities remain committed to the rules-based macroeconomic framework and to adjust policies as needed." International Monetary Fund (IMF) External Relations Department, "IMF Executive Board Completes Review of Mexico's Performance Under the Flexible Credit Line," *International Monetary Fund Press Release Website* (22 December 2011) <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2011/pr11480.htm> (accessed 15 August 2012).

¹³⁰"The Federalists Papers," The Library of Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html> (accessed 4 January 2013).

the common defense of America a vital national interest that must be protected against all threats foreign and domestic.¹³¹ Hamilton wrote that the solution to the threat centers on the development of a “constitution [that] prevents the differences that neighborhood occasions, extinguishing that secret jealousy which disposes all states to aggrandize themselves at the expense of their neighbors.”¹³² In order to counter a potential threat states or groups of states typically design a strategy that will help provide leaders and planners with a vision of what the environment should look like to facilitate a particular political aim or goal, which shifts according to which way influential environmental factors blow. Mexico is not only a substantial trade partner but also poses a potential threat which disrupts U.S. national economic interests and the sense of values. Mexican DTOs and the transnational criminal activities they produce, directly and indirectly threaten the stability and security of its regional neighbors, most predominately the U.S., and the potentially the international community. Since the mid-1990s, the illicit activities of Mexican DTOs have expanded dramatically in scope and scale of illicit activity and spatial confines.¹³³ Mexican DTOs have expanded their illicit activities not only to Europe but have also ventured over to human trafficking, weapons trafficking, money laundering, kidnapping, and diversely vast amount of other illicit activates. In fact, the U.S. market for drug consumption remained relatively similar to what it was a decade ago. However, consumption in the Eastern Europe, the former

¹³¹Hamilton actually refers to threats directly when he stated “certain evils, and the probable dangers” are enough to be concern over based upon historical events, i.e. Peloponnesian War and the Hundred Years’ War, which he references in Federalists Paper No. 6. “The Federalists Papers;” Lairsey, “A Strategy for Mexico?,” 2011; Adam Smith, ed., *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776] (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1977).

¹³²“The Federalists Papers,” Paper No. 6.

¹³³The last three sentences are a synthesis and summation of the following sources: The Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 242; Lairsey, “A Strategy for Mexico?,” 2011; Phil Williams and Dimitri Vlassis, *Combating Transnational Crime: Concepts, Activities, and Responses* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 1.

Soviet Union states, and portions of the Middle East and Latin America has grown substantially over the same period.¹³⁴ This DTO expansionism also creates a link with other agents of the criminal underworld such as transnational terrorist organizations and other transnational criminal organizations, which increases the threat to the U.S., other neighboring countries in the north western hemisphere, and the global community. For example, a 2001 study concluded that money laundering by transnational criminal organizations ranges from two to five percent of the global economy, meaning that a huge amount of “dirty” money threatens the legitimacy of “clean” businesses globally.¹³⁵ These linkages to global threat organizations, terrorist and criminal, raise the learning curve for all parties, increases the violence associated with networks of transnational criminal organizations, and exacerbates “the impact of corruption on stability in counties where transnational criminal organizations” like Mexican DTOs reside, posing “serious risks to U.S. interests and those of our partners.”¹³⁶ The question that derives from the current situation in Mexico is one of strategy. No matter whether the aforementioned threats are a hundred percent accurate is of little concern as long as the threat is correctly portrayed. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a strategy that directs national powers for all parties concerned toward a unified purpose.¹³⁷ For example, President Woodrow Wilson espoused a strategy with an idealistic point of view to spread of democracy. However, other political strategies reflect a more realist ideal of “balance of power” noted by Kenneth Waltz, and expressed by both the U.S. and Soviet Union

¹³⁴Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 242.

¹³⁵Williams and Vlassis, *Combating Transnational Crime: Concepts, Activities, and Responses*, 2001, 358.

¹³⁶Lairsey, “A Strategy for Mexico?,” 2011.

¹³⁷Ibid; U.S. joint publication defines the strategic level and the concept of strategic guidance as an “idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.” United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*, xi.

throughout the Cold War.¹³⁸ Regardless of what perspective, ideal, or international relations theory a nation adopts, the need to provide vision is paramount to the development of internal national capabilities, as well as foreign relations that “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves [the United States] and our posterity.”¹³⁹ Based upon legacy strategies and economic interconnectivity of today’s U.S.-Mexico relationship, it is logically sound to conclude that the U.S. and Mexican governments need to craft a coherent and synchronized strategy that articulates a way ahead for regional and international relations as it pertains to the defense of national interests within North America.¹⁴⁰ However, in the wake of economic hardships, a clairvoyant and synchronized strategy becomes increasingly vital within the state of origin but also amongst neighboring nations and the international community in order to maximize resources to accomplish a unified goal, which the U.S. outlines as “stability and security in Mexico.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁸Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979), 5-7; George Pitt Lachicotte III, “SCOA Theorist Summary Paper on E.H. Carr,” Masters Term Paper, (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2012).

¹³⁹U.S. joint doctrine defines operational level as the linkage of “tactical employment of forces to national and military strategic objectives.” Tactical level is where tactics, “the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other,” are planned and executed within “battles, engagements, and activities at the tactical level to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces.” United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*, xi-xii; United States. "The United States Bill of Rights The Ten Original Amendments to the Constitution of the United States passed by Congress September 25, 1789, ratified December 15, 1791," *Project Gutenberg* (1990) <http://search.ebscohost.com/l> (accessed 6 January 2013), preamble.

¹⁴⁰The phrase to “to support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” is within the oath of office for all members of congress, the military, law enforcement, and numerous other governmental agencies and organizations with the U.S. United States Senate, "Oath of Office: 1862 version," *United States Senate*. (n.d.) http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Oath_Office.htm (accessed 6 January 2013); Lairsey, “A Strategy for Mexico?,” 2011.

¹⁴¹Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 2010, 42.

United States' Strategic Vision to Achieve Security and Stability in Mexico

The foundational document for contemporary United States security strategy is the National Security Strategy (NSS) synthesized from the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, the Federalists Papers, other written and expressed ideals of the U.S. founders, and 237 years of foreign relations and domestic policies, laws, and regulations. Scholars, like Johnny M. Lairsey Jr., argue that the United States lacks a strategy at all, especially with regards to Mexico.¹⁴² Regardless, the United States government produces executive documents that state the word “strategy” on the front cover, but the question remains, does the contents actually provide visionary guidance for what the future looks like with regards to U.S.-Mexican relations? Also, does the United States, Mexican, and/or international organizations, like the United Nations (UN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have a vision for the way ahead for how approach the violent drug war situation in Mexico?

The NSS and President Obama’s words articulate rhetoric reminiscent of President Woodrow Wilson’s during his post-World War I vision for the nation regarding U.S.-Mexico border relations and the potential threat that emerges from Mexico. Idealism guided President Wilson’s vision of a solution to inter-state problems as being the creation of a respected system of international law, backed by the cooperation and oversight of international organizations. This idealism resulted in the founding of the League of Nations in 1920 and in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, outlawing war and providing for the peaceful settlements of disputes through dialogue rather than violence.¹⁴³ The NSS and President Obama’s words are not so idealistic that

¹⁴²Lairsey, “A Strategy for Mexico?,” 2011.

¹⁴³George Scott, *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 51; William C. Fray and Lisa A. Spar, “Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928,” *The Avalon Project* (1996) <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/kbpact.htm> (accessed 21 November 2012).

they paint a naïve view of international situation. However, the tone gives short shrift to growing domestic issues related to the drug war emanating from within Mexico. There are eleven specific mentions of China spanning five full pages within the NSS, yet the NSS only mentions Mexico five times within three very short paragraphs. Furthermore, the NSS specifically articulates a more prescriptive strategic approach of how economic and regional security cooperation strengthens through U.S. relations with the Middle East, Russia, and India, as well as China.¹⁴⁴ However, the NSS only vaguely notes that domestic security via transnational criminal organizations is a threat resolved through regional cooperation with Canada and Mexico in order to promote “stability and security” within the region.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the language used acknowledges the threat, but offers little with regards to defining strategic goals or objectives, as it does with other regions and countries.

A second strategic document and the primary document for strategic guidance for U.S.-Mexican relations is the Mérida Initiative.¹⁴⁶ The violent spillover deriving from the illicit activities of DTOs in Mexico along the southwest border provoked congressional concern which

¹⁴⁴Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 2010, 8, 11-2, 43.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 15, 42-3.

¹⁴⁶U.S. and Mexican officials refer to the Mérida Initiative as a “paradigm shift” in U.S.-Mexican relations and the cooperative fight against the war on drugs. Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 10; Thomas S. Kuhn defines “paradigms” as being closely related to “normal science,” which “means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice.” He continues by explaining how a paradigm shift or “scientific revolution” occurs when anomalies occur that “subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice – then begin the extraordinary investigations that lead the profession at last to a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science.” It is difficult to conclude whether the Mérida Initiative altered the thinking of international relations theory with regards to U.S. – Mexico relations. However, the “paradigm shift” terminology illustrates the significance contribution made to U.S.-Mexican security relations and fundamental shift that occurred with the revised version of the Mérida Initiative. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 6-10.

led to the creation of the Mérida Initiative on 22 October 2007. The initiative was a gradual agreement that evolved from the 1998 Bilateral Drug Control Strategy due Mexico's reluctance to take U.S. aid due to apprehension for past U.S. aggression against Mexico.¹⁴⁷ This multi-year initiative spanned from Fiscal Year (FY) 2008-10 at a cost of 1.5 billion U.S. dollars "in U.S. assistance to Mexico, Central America, [Haiti, and the Dominican Republic] aimed at combating drug trafficking and organized crime."¹⁴⁸ Initially, the Mérida Initiative focused on training and equipping counterdrug forces in order to combat human, drug, and arms trafficking in the participating countries. However, the initiative evolved and now emphasizes the improvement judicial, law enforcement institutions, and the social infrastructures that enable drug trafficking to flourish within Mexico.¹⁴⁹ As of March 2010, the strategic philosophy of the Mérida Initiative

¹⁴⁷Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 8; Mexico governmental official expressed opposition to the DEA and other U.S. governmental agencies operating in Mexico due the United States' past aggressions. For example, the U.S. war against Mexico in 1846, where Mexico lost approximately two-thirds of its territory to the U.S. for \$15 million. Secondly, neither the declaration of Texas independence in 1836 nor the formalization of Texas as a U.S. state in 1845 was formally recognized by Mexico. Finally, two military operations, one in 1914 led by Admiral Frank "Friday" Fletcher into Veracruz and the other in 1916 led by Brigadier General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing against Pancho Villa, continue to anger Mexicans, thus, contributing to Mexico paranoia with regards to U.S. action south of the international border. Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexican Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategy Studies, National Defense University*, No. 243 (July 2009). The cost, territorial acquisition, and timeline for the 1846 U.S.-Mexican War confirmed in the following source: Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: The Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 267-8.

¹⁴⁸Haiti and Dominican Republic were added to the quote because 110th Congress expanded the initiative to those countries under the FY2008 Supplemental Appropriation Act (P.L. 110-252). Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 2; The amount for the initiative in this source states that it was \$1.4 billion. Clare Ribando Seelke and June S. Beittel, *Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues*, Congressional Research Report (Washington DC: Congress Research Service, 2009), Summary; The amount for the initiative in this source states that it was \$1.6 billion. United States Department of State: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, "Mérida Initiative: Expanding the U.S./Mexico Partnership," *U.S. Department of State fact sheets* (29 March 2012) <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2012/187119.htm> (accessed 15 January 2013).

¹⁴⁹Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and*

shifted and currently centers “on four pillars: (1) disrupting organized criminal groups; (2) institutionalizing the rule of law; (3) building a 21st century border; and (4) building strong and resilient communities.”¹⁵⁰ Regardless of the shift, the Mérida Initiative “signaled a major diplomatic step forward for the U.S.-Mexican counterdrug cooperation, which...resulted in increased bilateral communication and cooperation, from law enforcement officials engaging in joint operations on the U.S.-Mexican border to cabinet-level officials meeting regularly to discuss bilateral security efforts.”¹⁵¹ Even though all countries accepted the shared responsibility to deal domestic issues that contribute to the illicit activities of DTOs in the region, some Mexican officials remained skeptical of U.S. dominance.¹⁵² Furthermore, U.S. agencies other than the U.S. Department of State (DOS) suffered from selective reading disorder because the Mérida Initiative competes with their business practices and tactics which directly link to promotions and recognition, such as drug seizures and DTOs member arrests.¹⁵³ This highlights the fact that unless the organizations is a direct beneficiary of the guidance then that organization is unlikely to adhere to guidance that conflicts with their internal infrastructure linked to their interpretation of the NSS.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) exemplifies such a strategy document. The purpose of the NDS is to articulate “how we [United States] seek to work with and through partner nations to shape opportunities in the international environment to enhance security and

Beyond, 2011, 2.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 2; United States Department of State: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

¹⁵¹Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 10.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid., 30-1.

avert conflict.”¹⁵⁴ The National Defense Strategy is the “capstone document” that provides strategic guidance for U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) planning informed by the NSS.¹⁵⁵ The NDS provides to linkage from the NSS to the National Military Strategy (NMS) through the office of the Secretary of Defense.¹⁵⁶ In theory, the NDS “provides the framework...for strategic guidance, specifically on campaign and contingency planning, force development, and

¹⁵⁴Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 30-1.

¹⁵⁵Robert M. Gates, *National Defense Strategy*, Public Report (Washington DC: United States Department of Defense, June 2008), 1

¹⁵⁶Gates, *National Defense Strategy*, 2008, 1; “The first activity in the Planning Phase is a review of previous guidance. This review examines the evolution in required capabilities and changes in military strategy and policy as documented in the National Defense Strategy (NDS) issued by the SECDEF (first issued in 2005 and re-issued in June 2008). The NDS provides strategic guidance on the priority of defense missions and associated strategic goals. The review also includes the National Military Strategy (NMS) issued by the CJCS. The NMS provides strategic direction on how the Joint Force should align the military ends, ways, means, and risks consistent with the goals established in the NDS. The Planning Phase also includes the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) (which was last completed in 2006 and is required to be completed again and submitted to the Congress in 2010). The QDR provides the results of a comprehensive examination of potential threats, strategy, force structure, readiness posture, modernization programs, infrastructure, and information operations and intelligence. All of these documents provide strategy-based planning and broad programming advice for preparation of what was previously published as the Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG); however, in 2008 the SPG was replaced by a new document. The Guidance for the Development of the Force (GDF) considers a long-term view of the security environment and helps shape the investment blueprint for the six Program Objective Memorandum (POM) years. Issued for the first time by SECDEF in May 2008, it establishes priorities within and across Joint Capability Areas managed by Capability Portfolio Managers (CPMs). In a forthcoming Department of Defense Directive (DoDD), the CPMs are to be charged with developing capability portfolio planning guidance and programming, budgeting, and acquisition advice. The overall role of the CPMs will be to manage assigned portfolios by integrating, coordinating, and synchronizing programs to optimize capability within time and budget constraints. A related document, but not included in the PPBE process, is the Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF), which sets forth operational priorities from the present time through the next two years (budget years). The GEF was issued by SECDEF for the first time in May 2008. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), which is developed concurrently with the GEF and issued by the CJCS, tasks the COCOMs with developing plans consistent with the GEF.” Defense Acquisition University, *ACQuipedia*, (15 April 2010) <https://dap.dau.mil/acquipedia/Pages/ArticleDetails.aspx?aid=74001e62-b42b-4c50-9ec6-b0a9566b1a1a> (accessed 27 January 2013).

intelligence.”¹⁵⁷ Additionally, it should reflect the findings of the Quadrennial Defense Review and lessons learned from recent military operations.¹⁵⁸ Ultimately, the NDS should provide clarity on how the defeat terrorism and prevent future attacks; build partnerships and strengthen alliances; prevent the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); work to prevent and deter regional conflicts; and “transform national security institutions to face the challenges of the 21st century.”¹⁵⁹ This verbiage does reflect the essence of the NSS, yet it does not place emphasis on or place emphasis on threats emerging from the illicit activities of DTOs in Mexico.

The National Defense Strategy specifically mentions the defense of the homeland and the deterrence of conflict as two as the five DOD key objectives.¹⁶⁰ However, the NDS does not refer to defending the U.S. domestically against transnational criminal organizations or resolving the conflict that festers south of the U.S.-Mexican border.¹⁶¹ Instead, the NDS focuses primarily on Russia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia (China directly), India, and Sub-Sahara Africa, and continues to espouse guidance that appears still chances shadows of the Cold War era.¹⁶² There is also heavy attention placed on MWDs and the need to foster economic prosperity, yet the strategy guidance for the Department of Defense on how to approach the treat in Mexico remains unclear.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷Gates, *National Defense Strategy*, 2008, 1.

¹⁵⁸Ibid; Defense Acquisition University, *ACQuipedia*, 2010.

¹⁵⁹Gates, *National Defense Strategy*, 2008, 2.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 6.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 6-12. The NDS expands upon each of the five key tasks, but the focus is on the defense of U.S. from nations in the eastern hemisphere.

¹⁶²Ibid., 3-4, 10-4. The NDS specifically mentions China sixteen times and Russia ten times both as potential threats and as future trade and security cooperation partners.

¹⁶³Ibid., 14-5, 18-20. The NDS does mention the need from “jointness” and how the

The National Military Strategy is the first level within the hierarchy of strategic guidance for U.S. DOD organizations that specifically mentions Mexico's DTO problem and vaguely outlines an approach to solve the complex issue. It "provides strategic direction on how the Joint [military] Force should align the military ends, ways, means, and risks consistent with the goals established in the NDS."¹⁶⁴ This strategic document provides a synthesized analysis of the current trends of the operational environment and explains how the military will approach them to achieve the desired strategic goal, as well as defines the "regional and functional capability priorities."¹⁶⁵ The NMS articulates how the U.S. military should approach the security concerns with Mexico through a shared responsibility to "assist Mexican security forces in combating violent transnational criminal organizations."¹⁶⁶ The same section also notes the need to unify efforts with Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as well as the need to coordinate efforts

whole-of-government approach is the only solution to complex problems. It does specially references U.S. Southern Command as a successful example of interagency and intergovernmental collaboration and jointness. However, Mexico technically falls under U.S. Northern Command there is still a lack of threat acknowledgement which permeates from Mexico.

¹⁶⁴Defense Acquisition University, *ACQuipedia*, 2010.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid*; Operational environment (OE) is a U.S. Army term defined as "a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*, 2011, xv-xvi; United States Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0: *Unified Land Operations*, 2012, Glossary-5; The NMS further describes three broad themes designed to achieve this strategy approach. First, the NMS places emphasis on the joint force leadership as a vital aspect of military capabilities. Secondly, requires that the U.S. military strengthen the "relationships with allies and create opportunities for partnerships," which should include a broader range actors. Finally, the military must organize and prepare itself for an uncertain future which includes diversifying the internal organization to adapt to any threat that may arise in order to support and defend the United States and its interests. United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 2011, Chairman's opening letter.

¹⁶⁶United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 2011, 11.

across North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.¹⁶⁷ Although Mexico is identified in conjunction with the potentially of the spillover threat that lingers within its borders, it continues to lack the depth and clarity of the guidance provided to other countries and regions.

Additionally, the NMS provides equal to or greater detailed guidance for the approach in the Middle East and Africa yet remains ambiguous with regards to U.S. dealings with Mexico.¹⁶⁸ Due to this ambiguity of guidance and competing strategies, DOD organizations struggle with the identification of their specific role with regards to the Mexican problem.

The National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) articulates a single point of focus to “prevent illicit drug use and addiction before their onset and bring more Americans in need of treatment into contact with the appropriate level of care.”¹⁶⁹ The Director of National Drug Control Policy, R. Gil Kerlikowske, states the strategy is at the direction of President and incorporates input from a wide variety of “Congressional, Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and international partners, nongovernmental organizations, and the American public.”¹⁷⁰ The two primary goals of the strategy are to “curtail illicit drug consumption in America” and “improve the public health and public safety of the American people by reducing the consequences of drug abuse.”¹⁷¹ For example, the DEA now has the responsibility to control all congressionally banned synthetic drugs, such as “bath salts,” as well as work with all forms of governance to initiate a

¹⁶⁷United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 2011, 10-1.

¹⁶⁸To obtain more specificity of U.S. military strategic guidance toward African and Middle Eastern countries references the following source: United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 2011, 11-2.

¹⁶⁹Barrack Obama, *National Drug Control Strategy*, Public Report (Washington, DC: The Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2012), Preface from Director Kerlikowske.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 3.

prescription drug take back programs.¹⁷² Additionally, the strategy requires the Department of Human and Health Services (HHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), Veteran Affairs (VA), and DHS to conduct drug awareness workshops and maintain online drug prevention resources, yet do not allocate additional resources to accomplish these directed tasks.¹⁷³ Although this outlines a strategy to combat a single aspect of the DTOs' business organization, the illicit product, it also provides broad guidance to JIIM organizations to combat the DTOs.¹⁷⁴

While the preponderance of the guidance tends to focus on a single aspect of the illicit drug business, illegal drugs, two sections of the NDCS describe a JIIM approach to combat “transnational criminal organizations,” cartels, and DTOs at the regional and international levels.¹⁷⁵ Although the previously stated domestic drug prevention aspect of the NDCS redirects limited governmental resources to action the strategic guidance of the President, it also articulates the need for continued JIIM efforts. The NDCS does provide directive guidance to combat drug trafficking, transnational criminal, or terrorist organizations, but it does give past and present working examples to model future efforts after. For example, the NDCS articulates the unified efforts of U.S. and Colombia, the creation of the new Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) co-located with High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task forces to form fusion centers (OFC), and the design of the Mérida Initiative, in order to synchronize efforts

¹⁷²Barrack Obama, *National Drug Control Strategy*, 2012, 2.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, 8-10.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 31-8.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 25-38. Transnational criminal organizations specifically mentioned in this strategic document are not synonymous to previous used Drug Trafficking Organizations and cartels. They are organizations that are involved with drug trafficking in order to fund other illicit activities, but it may or may not be their primary means of illegal funding. Furthermore, these organizations are not limited to North or South American continents.

and force collaboration onto separate JIIM organizations.¹⁷⁶ Even though these examples articulate historic working programs that may work for future problems, they also highlight the confusing nature of multiple forms of strategic guidance because there is no primacy organization established for other governmental organizations to unify efforts under. Additionally, the primary focus of NDCS is on a single aspect of the DTO business, drugs, rather than the complex system that drugs derive. Therefore, as Dietrich Dörner writes in his *Logic of Failure*, “the links between the variables oblige us to attend to a great many features simultaneously, and that, concomitantly, makes it impossible for us to undertake only one action in a complex system.”¹⁷⁷ The NDCS does a better job than other strategy guidance documents, but because of competing strategic documents that focus on different aspects of the DTO business it loses its ability to unify JIIM efforts. Thus, competing narratives from other strategic documents make it difficult for organizations like DOD to synchronize efforts in order to accomplish to overarching goals of stability of security outlined in the NSS.

The National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy is another example of competing strategic guidance that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), DOJ, and DHS must balance in order to properly executive the intent of the United States government and its leadership. The very same office that produces the NDCS creates the National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy (NSWBCS). This is the first strategic document that acknowledges the spillover violence created by Mexican DTOs. Is also summarizes the importance of unifying the efforts of the Mérida Initiative, various Untied States governmental agencies, and the communities of the four U.S. border states in order to support the Mexican government’s efforts

¹⁷⁶Barrack Obama, *National Drug Control Strategy*, 2012, 25-34.

¹⁷⁷Dietrich Dörner, *Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1996), 38.

in a wide range of law enforcement and judicial areas.”¹⁷⁸ This strategic document continues by stating that despite these efforts, violence continues at high levels in the Southwest border region.¹⁷⁹ As a means to counter this increase in violence, Director Kerlikowske denotes a new approach which directs Federal agencies to educate and involve the communities in the Southwest Border States to enhance prevention efforts and assist with treatment.¹⁸⁰ However, this only addresses one small element of the guidance provided in this strategy document.

The National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy is one of the most comprehensive strategic documents with regards to providing guidance. It explicitly states that the strategic goal is to “substantially reduce the flow of illicit drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence across the Southwest border.”¹⁸¹ The strategy also identifies ten strategic objectives which coincide with the efforts outlined in the Mérida Initiative.¹⁸² More importantly, this guidance, although directive in nature, sets forth the U.S. government’s strategy for border control through ports of entry and between the ports, directs coordinated intelligence and information sharing efforts, stipulates the “roles and responsibilities (as defined in Section 702 (7) of the National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 (21 U.S.C. 1701 (7))” for all involved governmental agencies, and highlights the resources and allocates funding for

¹⁷⁸Barrack Obama, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, Public Report (Washington DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011), Introductory Letter from Director Kerlikowske.

¹⁷⁹Obama, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, 2011, Introductory Letter from Director Kerlikowske.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 1-3.

these agencies in order to implement the strategy.¹⁸³

As comprehensive as the National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy is, it still contains gaps. While the NSWGCS states that the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) will oversee this strategy, it lacks the authority to hold other agencies accountable.¹⁸⁴ With over twenty participating U.S. Federal agencies and meetings chaired by three different oversight organizations, managing the lead role and synchronizing efforts is nearly impossible.¹⁸⁵ Secondly, the strategy identifies cross-border tunnels as a primary threat to the security of the U.S. and “lays out an interagency approach to end the construction and use of tunnels for smuggling illegal contraband into the United States.”¹⁸⁶ The risk or gap here rest on the strategy’s depiction of a single aspect of the DTOs’ business, which detracts attention, efforts, and resources away from a holistic synchronized JIIM approach. Even though the NSWBCS is, arguably, the most comprehensive strategic guidance it concludes by giving specific guidance that narrows the focus of JIIM organizations, thus confusing efforts and mucking up the clarity of a succinct vision statement.

Although the Office of National Drug Control Policy provides a detailed and clear level of guidance it also provides almost identical strategic guidance for the Northern U.S. Border

¹⁸³Obama, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, 2011, 4, 9-12.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.* The Department of Homeland Security, Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (DHS/CNE) and the Department of Justice, Office of the Deputy Attorney General (DOJ/ODAG) represented through the Southwest Border Executive Steering Group (SWB ESG), as well as senior leaders of the Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) all have leading roles with regards to the strategy implementation. Thus, even the lead organization is in contention.

¹⁸⁶Obama, *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, 2011, 59.

states.¹⁸⁷ This makes guidance to federal agencies even more complex because of the limited capacities these agencies currently face due to recent budgetary constraints. A secondary effect is that limited funding also creates internal competition which forces them to produce tangible metrics, such as criminal arrests and illicit drug tonnage seized, in order to justify continued funding. Thus, reinforcing the “metrics production trap” which neglects the long-term strategic goals articulated in the all of the aforementioned strategic guidance documents.¹⁸⁸

Another strategic document is the DOJ’s Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime which provides strategic guidance to agencies like the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); the Internal Revenue Service; the Postal Inspection Service; the Secret Service; the DEA; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Bureau of Diplomatic Security; the Department of Labor/Office of the Inspector General; components of the State Department; the Treasury Department; and various agencies in the intelligence community.¹⁸⁹ It outlines “four

¹⁸⁷Barrack Obama, *National Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, Public Report (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2012), 2. The strategic goal for the Northern Border States strategy is identical to the goal written in the Southwest Border Strategy. Furthermore, the five strategic objectives are five of the ten objectives in the Southwest Border Strategy.

¹⁸⁸The “Metrics production trap” is a term used to describe the concept of becoming too focused on the parts of a systems and failing to see how those parts integrate into the systems holistically. Metrics are often produced that reinforce causes that do not contribute to the overarching desired effect of an individual, organization, institutions, or groups. For example, military organizations historically used attrition as a metric to determine success; however, for every enemy insurgent/guerilla killed or wounded in action in Operation Enduring Freedom there appeared to be more that surfaced to take their place. The trap came into play because evaluations and perceived success need to be measured, which reinforced the need to continue with operations that accumulated death tolls. The is best summarized in the following source: Curt A. Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, Case Study for the Project of National Security Reform (Washington, DC: United States Drug Enforcement Agency, 2010), 34-42.

¹⁸⁹United States Department of Justice, *Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Criminal Organizations*, Public Report (Washington, DC: United States

priority areas of action against international organized crime,” which include the collaboration of information and intelligence amongst JIIM organizations, prioritization and targeting of the largest threats, use of a omnidirectional attack methodology in collaboration with JIIM organizations, and develop strategies that focus on the international criminal organization (ICO) enterprise, “especially their leadership.”¹⁹⁰ This strategic document does not specifically mention Mexican DTOs, but it does lay out eight threats that Mexican DTOs have the ability and capability to affect. These threats include penetration of the “energy and other strategic sectors of the economy;” support to trans-international terrorist organizations, “foreign intelligence services and governments;” human trafficking and other contraband goods; erosion of the U.S. and international financial system; exploitation of the cyberspace domain; manipulation of securities exchanges and perpetration of fraud to steal from investors and consumers; public official corruption; and physical violence.¹⁹¹ The important take away from this list of threats is that they are interdependent, which is why Mexican DTOs have the ability and capability to activity participate in all eight threat areas. Additionally, ICOs like Mexican DTOs do not have to physically be residing in the United States to engage in illicit activities that target “the U.S., its interests, and its people. With the acceleration of globalization, the reach of the Internet, and expansion of international banking networks and modern technologies, international, organized criminals” can hide in a safe haven of their choosing.¹⁹² Therefore, to expand profits and to hedge against “primary commodity” risk, Mexican DTOs had to expand their illicit drug enterprise into

Department of Justice, 2008), 1.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 2-9.

¹⁹²United States Department of Justice, *Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Criminal Organizations*, 2008, 10.

areas illicit areas.¹⁹³

This expansion of illicit activities by Mexican DTOs crosses governmental segregated boundaries which further complicate the strategic guidance espoused in strategic documents. The National Strategy for Counterterrorism is the perfect example of this complication. The DOJ's Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime states that a primary threat is trans-international terrorism, yet this is the National Counterterrorism Center's (NCTC) primary mission.¹⁹⁴ Although the NCTC gathers its guidance from a variety of strategic documents, however, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism provides the foundational guidance. The National Strategy for Counterterrorism derives its power by stating that the President affirms in his 2010 National Security Strategy that "he bears no greater responsibility than ensuring the safety and security of the American people," and counterterrorism (CT) tops his prioritization list to ensure the security of its citizenry.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, if the DOJ and NCTC each articulate that CT is a top mission within their organization, who has the lead and what authorities do these organizations have over the multitude of agencies charged with the same mission? These questions exceed the scope of this paper, but they do illustrate the confusing nature of U.S.

¹⁹³"Primary commodity" exports are single commodities that countries or business rely upon for financial income. The Mexican DTOs enterprise is at risk if they "fail to diversify their economies efficiently and remain highly dependent on the exploitation of natural resource intensive goods" whose profitability is exceptionally high, especially when producing many goods inefficiently come at very high social costs. Richard Lynn Ground, *Rent-Seeking and Economic Activities, Income Distribution, and Collective Welfare*, Information Paper for Global and International Studies 750: Conflict and Development (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2012), 29.

¹⁹⁴National Counterterrorism Center's mission reads: "Lead our nation's effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad by analyzing the threat, sharing that information with our partners, and integrating all instruments of national power to ensure unity of effort." National Counterterrorism Center, *About NCTC*, n.d. <http://www.nctc.gov/> (accessed 3 March 2013).

¹⁹⁵Barrack Obama, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, Public Report (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011), 1.

strategy guidance and domain overlap.

The National Strategy for Maritime Security and the International Strategy for Cyberspace are two more examples of strategy documents that muddy the waters on which agency has primacy over a particular domain. First, the National Strategy for Maritime Security provides strategic guidance for organizations with maritime domain responsibilities to “integrate security activities on a global scale” that contends with “all maritime threats.”¹⁹⁶ The documents broadly states that these responsibilities belong to all “appropriate Federal, State, local, and private sector entities,” however, the document lacks any authority to enforce its guidance to the wide range of governmental organizations. Furthermore, this document provides ambiguous guidance spread across eight supporting implementation plans.¹⁹⁷ This requires agencies to decipher the meaning of this strategic document in conjunction with eight other subordinate documents to derive the maritime strategic understanding.

Lastly, “the National Strategy for Maritime Security and its supporting implementation plans together address” four of the six fundamental “characteristics of an effective strategy” as defined by the United States Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) in 2004. The two areas where this strategic guidance falls short are: (1) clearly defined “goals, objectives, activities, and performance measures and (2) resources, investments, and risk management.”¹⁹⁸ As of November 2007, the GAO working identified ninety-two percent of actions required under the National

¹⁹⁶George W. Bush, *The National Strategy for Maritime Security*, Public Report (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2005), ii. The threats indicated within this document are terrorism centric due to the recent memory of the 9/11 attacks which occurred four years prior to the release of this strategy document.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸United States Government Accountability Office, *Maritime Security: National Strategy and Supporting Plans Were Generally Well Developed and are Being Implemented*, Public Report (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2008), 2-5.

Maritime Strategy and its eight supporting implementation plans were still ongoing.¹⁹⁹ This means that for one reason or another only a very small percentage of the required action in this strategy made it from the guidance phase through planning and execution to the assessment and evaluation phase.²⁰⁰ The inability to complete seventy of the seventy-six actions within this strategy derived from the following challenges: “(1) the need to align the implementing actions in overlapping national strategies, (2) the lack of dedicated interagency resources to effectively coordinate actions in supporting plans, and (3) the differences in the prioritization of actions by responsible components and agencies.”²⁰¹ Thus, the confusion of action roles within domains becomes more tenuous and frustrating with the implementation of more strategic guidance, which could and does lead to either active or passive resistance.

A second domain related strategy exemplifying the confusing nature of too much strategic guidance is The National Strategy of Cyberspace. First, the very domain of cyberspace is unclear. No one country owns it, like territorial waters, air space, or physical borders. Therefore, it is difficult to enforce an internet intrusion or intellectual property rights violations when the perpetrator is in another nation. In fact, the U.S. is still seeking to “pursue a broad international consensus of states that recognize the importance of respect for property and network stability, and will back up that conviction with [the]...willingness to defend our (United States’ and nation partners’) networks from acts that would compromise them.”²⁰² This makes it extremely difficult for action agencies to carry out their responsibilities when the left and right boundaries are

¹⁹⁹United States Government Accountability Office, *Maritime Security: National Strategy and Supporting Plans Were Generally Well Developed and are Being Implemented*, 2008, 5.

²⁰⁰*Ibid.*

²⁰¹*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰²Barrack Obama, *International Strategy for Cyberspace*, Public Report (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011), 17.

unclear. Secondly, the cyberspace domain is largely out of the government's ability to control due to private industries, other nation-states, and non-states actors. Therefore, the strategic guidance attempts to reach out to the "private sector, civil society, and end-users" by appealing to their sense of humanity and responsibility to the greater good.²⁰³ This is great for inspiring community action, but what cyberspace end-users, private industry personnel, or everyday citizen will realistically read, understand, or adhere to this strategy. Furthermore, resourcing, funding, and enforcement authority make governmental agencies' execution ability difficult to action. Thus, the ill-defined nature of cyberspace and over-dependence on non-governmental participation make federal, state, and local organizations' capacity to act nearly impossible to shape, regulate, and enforce.

The ambiguity within the United States domestic and foreign policy strategy does allow for planning flexibility for future implementation across the broad spectrum of the various governmental organizations involved.²⁰⁴ Additionally, providing indistinct guidance leaves room for interpretation and maximizes the ability of an organization to think critically by reducing the restrictiveness of detailed guidance. The alternative of too much guidance from a higher authority can hinder an organization's ability to plan because it limits options by constraining and restricting actions.²⁰⁵ However, the duality of providing vague guidance to an organization leaves the question of who has lead responsibility and who supports whom, among the issues. Furthermore, the U.S. government produces more than one hundred and twenty strategic documents, making it difficult to synchronize guidance and for individual agencies to digest for

²⁰³Barrack Obama, *International Strategy for Cyberspace*, 2011, 25.

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*

²⁰⁵United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 5-0: *Joint Operation Planning*, 2011, III-13.

executability purposes.²⁰⁶ This opens the door for other organizations and even subordinate agencies or departments to create their own narrative describing their view of the current situation and the strategic goal. Agencies design their individual organization's operational approach to bridge the gap between the current situation and the desired strategic goal. Thus, individual organizations within the U.S. government tend to design an approach that often remains unsynchronized from other JIIM organizations because their agencies' strategic narrative paints a slightly different picture based upon how they view things and their individualistic external pressures, such as authorities, funding, stakeholders, customers, and politics.

Mexico's Strategic Vision for Security and Stability within their Borders

In order to fully comprehend Mexico's strategy, one must first look the evolution of Mexican strategy from the past three presidents. Mexico's strategy is more personal than the United States' strategy. The U.S. National Security Strategy only slightly shifts when a change in presidency occurs because of its enduring nature.²⁰⁷ Whereas, the Mexican national strategy is regime change centric and moves as far as the new president desires. Therefore, as new presidents take office, a new strategy also emerges with the change in guard. Recent history has consumed Mexican leadership with the issue of DTOs and the negative costs associated with the illicit business. Mexico's national strategy revolves around its ability to regain control of ungoverned territories and establish stability within its borders. So, the issue then become questions of how

²⁰⁶The Homeland Security Digital Library currently lists more than 120 different agency strategic documents. It does not specify which agency adheres to which strategic document. The Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security, *Homeland Security Digital Library* (21 February 2013) <https://www.hSDL.org/?collection/stratpol&id=4> (accessed 21 February 2013).

²⁰⁷When comparing the current 2010 United States National Security Strategy to the 2005 and the 1996 NSS the current global situation changes, but the U.S. goals tend to remain constant – defend the homeland, its people, and national interests abroad.

deeply is Mexico influenced by the DTOs and how do U.S.-Mexican relations impact the development of Mexico's security strategy in order to allow the Mexican government to achieve its goal of stability and security?

As previously indicated, Mexico's illicit activity issues date back to the era of U.S. prohibition, which opened the door for today's regional concerns. Additionally, the Mexican government is notorious for its corruption and linkage to DTOs, which severely detracts from any real strategy to prevent, deter, or defeat DTOs and the violent spillover costs it produces.²⁰⁸ It was not until the election of President Vicente Fox in 2000, that the Mexican government began to acknowledge that Mexico had a corruption problem and that cartels were beginning to gain too much power. Prior to former President Fox, Mexican cooperation with the United States was less than satisfactory.²⁰⁹ Robert Bonner noted, during the summer of 2010, that "before Fox, there had

²⁰⁸Prevent is defined in Joint publication 1-02 as being special or terrain oriented. It states that prevention "measures to preclude an adversary's hostile use of United States or third-party space systems and services. Prevention can include diplomatic, economic, and political measures." Deterrence is adversarial focused. It noted that deterrence is "the prevention from action by fear of the consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction." United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1-02: *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The United States Joint Chiefs of Staffs, 2011), 107, 290; Finally, defeat is a tactical term used to indicated "when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use." United States Department of the Army, Field Manual 1-02: *Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington DC: United States Department of the Army, 2004), 1-54; Defeat is best described by Sun Tzu as "rendering the enemy incapable of achieving its goals." Gary Hart, "The McChrystal Way of War: Review," *The National Interest* (March 1, 2013) <http://nationalinterest.org/bookreview/the-mcchrystal-way-war-8149?page=3> (accessed 28 February 2013).

²⁰⁹ Although cooperation was present between the U.S. and Mexico prior to President Fox, there was tension between the two countries due to their history and the geographic relation to one another. Many factors contribute to the lack of U.S.-Mexico cooperation prior to President Fox taking office, but the one that stands out more than others was the party affiliation of President Fox. He was the first Mexican President to break the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (IRP) seventy year hold on the executive branch. Deare, "U.S.-Mexican Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 2009, 3; The IPR has a long history of communication and cooperation with DTOs in Mexico.

been only six extraditions of Mexican citizens to the United States ever; during Fox's six-year tenure, there were 133. Since President Calderón came to power in 2006, there have been 144."²¹⁰ President Fox laid the groundwork that bridged to cooperative gap between the U.S. and Mexico and initiated open opposition to the DTOs. He opened discussions with President George W. Bush in 2000 to discuss items issues like immigration, energy policies, and counterdrug strategies.²¹¹ Unfortunately for President Fox, the tragic events of 9/11 caused a delay in U.S.-Mexican cooperative agreements and they did not resume until President Felipe Calderon took office as Mexico's president in 2006.²¹²

President Calderón and his administration restructured the Mexican security policies in order to facilitate a new security strategy in 2006, which coincided with the implementation of the Mérida Initiative in 2007. He and his top policy advisors centered the new strategy on five main areas: "(1) carrying our joint police-military operations to support local authorities and citizens; (2) increasing the operational and technological capabilities of the state (such as the Federal Police); (3) initiating legal and institutional reforms; (4) strengthening crime prevention and social programs; and (5) strengthening international cooperation (such as the Mérida Initiative)."²¹³ Calderon's strategy "focused on combating drug trafficking and organized crime, in part, increasing Mexico's annual budget for security and public safety from \$7.3 billion [U.S.] to \$10.9 billion [U.S.] in 2011."²¹⁴ The additional funding reinforced Mexican military and law

²¹⁰Bonner, "The New Cocaine Cowboys: How to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels," 2010; Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 208.

²¹¹Deare, "U.S.-Mexican Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 2009, 3-4.

²¹²*Ibid.*, 4.

²¹³Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 4.

²¹⁴*Ibid.*, 3; "Kingpin strategy" is a phrase used to depict targeting high leaders of Mexico

enforcement agencies to successfully target “leaders of the major DTOs,” also referred to as the “kingpin strategy.”²¹⁵ This marked Mexico’s formal acknowledgement of its internal issues but also sparked a dramatic increase in the violence.²¹⁶ Even though Mexico and U.S. intelligence cooperation led to rising captures of DTO kingpins, it also “contributed to brutal succession struggles, shifting alliances among the DTOs, and the replacement of existing leaders and criminal groups with others that are even more violent.”²¹⁷ The violence continues to rise today due to regime changes and turf wars that splintered from successive DTOs. To make the current situation worse, the PRI under Calderón’s presidency created stability, but it was stability in corruption. That political stability, combined with the pervasive corruption, created the environment for an implicit arrangement between Mexican authorities and drug trafficking organizations.”²¹⁸

Amidst a dire state of governmental corruption, Calderón also felt the impact of a weary public. His voters initially supported his strategy, but public approval began to decline around 2009 when “narco widows” began to take over a large portion of society.²¹⁹ The widowed children and spouses began to grow dissatisfied with the growing inability to provide financial

drug cartels by a number of U.S. and Mexican governmental agencies, but it is most routinely used by the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 50.

²¹⁵Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 3.

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Ibid., 4.

²¹⁸Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 141.

²¹⁹“Narco windows” refers to women and children who were widowed because of drug related deaths as well as those abandoned due to the eighty thousand or more fathers, brothers, and husbands incarcerated. Ibid., 155.

and social support from the head of households lost to incarceration or death. Due to these abandonment issues, citizens began to resent the Mexican government, which assisted the DTOs' ability to recruit. Additionally, due to the legacy of U.S. aggression, governmental officials and citizens alike actively resist Calderón's strategy partly out of spite.²²⁰ Thus, Calderón's strategy became a large source of its own violence. His strategy also had a secondary side effect. It spread to neighboring countries in Central America as well as Caribbean countries.²²¹ This causes the U.S. increases the perceived threat radiating from these regional countries, which has third order effects including the alteration of U.S. policies and the reallocation of appropriate counter resources.²²²

December 2012 saw the inauguration of Mexico's next president, Enrique Peña Nieto. President Peña Nieto discussed plans to reduce overall violence by fifty percent in the first year of his presidency by "creating a national gendarmerie, transferring military troops to the federal police, and increasing the military's focus on violent crimes."²²³ He outlined six *ejes del gobierno* (central ideas of the government) in a press release on 17 December 2012, which stated that Mexico will (1) pursue a planned strategy with clearly articulated goals rather than an ad hoc methodology, (2) work with the local population and social organizations to prevent illicit issues, (3) protect human rights, (4) coordination, (5) institutional transformation, and (6) evaluated and utilize feedback.²²⁴ The results of President Peña Nieto's proposals have not come to fore wishing

²²⁰David J. Danelo, *Toward a U.S.-Mexico Security Strategy: The Geopolitics of Northern Mexico and Implications for U.S. Policy*, Research Report (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2011), 8.

²²¹Carpenter, *The Fire Next Door*, 2012, 164-72.

²²²*Ibid.*, 172-3.

²²³*Ibid.*

²²⁴EGMO, "Peña Nieto Define Nueva Estrategia de Seguridad," *Informador.com.mx* (17

yet, however, it might be a little early in his presidency to realistically expect any major shifts in the military or law enforcement policies.²²⁵

The International Community's Strategy for Security and Stability in the Western Hemisphere

The international community's espoused vision is virtually non-existent with regards to the violence of Mexico's drug war. The United Nations still has not taken a stance with regards to the Mexican drug war, despite the numerous human rights violations committed by both DTOs and the Mexican government.²²⁶ Instead, the UN openly recognizes the atrocities that occur in Mexico and acknowledges that the U.S. is currently dealing with the issue, using the Mérida Initiative as a reference.²²⁷ However, the UN solution is to request further research before making any decisions or becoming involved.²²⁸ Essentially, the UN relieves itself of any responsibility and offers no strategic guidance even though the international institution states that activities in Mexican violate multiple sections of the UN Charter.²²⁹

The International Committee for the Red Cross claims a similar position to the UN. In fact, the organization chooses not to even acknowledge the situation in Mexico as a "non-

December 2012) <http://www.informador.com.mx/mexico/2012/424805/6/pena-nieto-define-nueva-estrategia-de-seguridad.htm> (accessed 28 February 2013).

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶United Nations Security Council, "World Model United Nations 2012: Vancouver," *WorldMUN.org*. (2012) <http://worldmun.org/upload/SC.pdf> (accessed 3 March 2013), 13.

²²⁷Ibid., 13-4.

²²⁸Ibid., 16.

²²⁹United Nations Security Council, "World Model United Nations 2012: Vancouver," *WorldMUN.org*. (2012) <http://worldmun.org/upload/SC.pdf> (accessed 3 March 2013), 16.

international armed conflict,” despite meeting all of the criteria to do so.²³⁰ The reasoning is if the situation in Mexico received war status then it would give the Mexican government the legitimization it needs to elevate the conflict using tanks, drones, and navy kinetic measures.²³¹ Therefore, ICRC provides no strategic guidance for the Mexican drug war.

Both the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross maintain positions of neutrality. This position of neutrality facilitates international community organizations to maintain legitimacy of action which allows them to retain freedom of access.²³² The access gives international organizations the ability to “maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress, better living standards, and human rights.”²³³ In order to avoid comprising accessibility to countries around the globe, international communities tend to avoid contentious situations by not choosing sides. This is especially true in the Western Hemisphere where the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine deters European based intervention in the Western Hemisphere.²³⁴

Strategic guidance provides the foundation for vision and gives a nation or groups of nations a cardinal direction. It provides that nation with a sense of purpose. In the case of the

²³⁰ Andrew Carswell, "Classifying the Conflict: A Soldier's Dilemma," *International Review of the Red Cross* 91, no. 873 (March 2009): 150-1; Andrew Carswell, *The Role of International Committee of the Red Cross*, Lecture (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 18 December 2012). This information was gleaned from both the lecture and the question and answer session that followed.

²³¹ Carswell, *The Role of International Committee of the Red Cross*, 2012.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ United Nations, *UN at a Glance*, <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/index.shtml> (accessed 3 March 2013).

²³⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Monroe Doctrine," *Encyclopaedia Britannica Presents Hispanic Heritage in the Americas* (2013) http://www.britannica.com/hispanic_heritage/article-9053434 (accessed 17 March 2013).

United States, strategic guidance is a bit overwhelming. There is no lack of guidance, yet the overabundance of strategy creates confusion for supporting organizations as they attempt to balance which guidance to execute. Additionally, the guidance is too vague in areas where it needs to provide more definitive direction in order to alleviate interagency territory disputes. Finally, the U.S. unproductively tries to synchronize guidance with Mexico and the international community, but falls short on both positions. First, Mexico lacks a stable strategy vision due to political business cycle compounded by corruption. Secondly, the U.S. cannot synchronize its strategy guidance when the international community fails to provide guidance for the drug war situation, making it difficult to nest tactical actions to strategy in order to achieve a purposeful and effective goal.

LINKING STRATEGY TO TACTICS: THE CURRENT OPERATIONAL APPROACH

Analysis of the United States' strategic guidance for Mexico's internal conflict has been incremental at best over the years.²³⁵ Although the U.S. uses the word "strategy" in their national documents, there is a lack of synchronization amongst subordinating strategic documents. The expansion of illicit activities not only increases the threat spawning from Mexican DTOs, it also complicates the strategic guidance that DOJ and other governmental agencies provide to their organizations. The complication derives from the reality that Mexican DTOs do not play by rules, regulations, or policies which bind governmental organizations. Therefore, as broad reaching as strategic guidance espouses for each organizations, they are still internally restricted at the tactical level by justifications, investigation primacy, and illicit area of focus. Furthermore, the NSS, is unclear with regards to U.S.-Mexico relations that it forces agencies to adhere to desynchronized

²³⁵Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

varying subordinate strategic documents in order to obtain guidance and direction for their operational and tactical leaders and staffs. For example, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is the executor of the Mérida Initiative because the authorization for funding derives from the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account.²³⁶ Moreover, the issue of metrics is a major point of consternation between the varying strategic documents because it is nearly impossible to determine which strategy resulted in the most arrests or highest number of seized drug tonnage.²³⁷ For example, the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) emphasizes its success over a twenty year span by claiming that the organizational efforts resulted in forty percent of the cocaine interdiction, the arrest of 4,600 traffickers, the capture of 1,100 vessels, and a 190 billion U.S. dollars reduction in profits.²³⁸ However, with all of the metric success, there is no evidence that it stopping or slowing the illicit activity conducted by DTOs. In fact, the debt of what is the proper measurement of success creates enormous concerns within the various JIIM organizations because causes those organizations to question their very existence. Thus, each governmental agency tends to develop its own campaign plan for dealing with instability and security within Mexico. As a result, even the closest of coordination and communication at the tactical level accomplishes little to nil with regards to the illicit activities of DTOs because there is not a unified linkage to strategy.

The National Strategic Security and supporting strategic documents use vague language

²³⁶Seelke and Beittel, *Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues*, 2009, 4.

²³⁷Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 39-40.

²³⁸Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force-South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*, Research Report (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011), 3.

that is open for interpretation. This allows the various agencies, tasked with executing the vision articulated within these documents, the freedom of interpretation in order to give them the latitude to execute as they see fit. However, the risk with decentralization is it allows agencies to fill the gaps as they see fit. As a means to fill the guidance gap, agencies develop their own methodology for executing the mission of combating transnational criminal organizations, which is similar in goal but competes with the other agencies and partnered nations' enforcement agencies. This occurs because the strategic guidance does not prescribe specific responsibilities nor does it synchronize U.S. policy, law, or regulations to compliment the actions of organizational and tactical planners and executioners.²³⁹

The United States has long relied on two primary strategic objectives to broadly define the approach taken toward combating the war of drugs. Interdiction and eradication are the two primary strategic objectives that U.S. agencies glean from the varying strategic guidance. The eradication aspect centers on cooperation with foreign governments to attack cultivation and illegal production of drugs. The interdiction objective is to stop the flow of drugs prior to reaching the U.S.²⁴⁰ The problem is that the U.S. governmental organizations designed plan and execute these two strategic objectives in a cooperative manner are disconnected by strategic guidance, competing organizational personalities, and internal policies and regulations.

United States organizations created to combat the war on drugs begin to segregate mission focus, regional alignments, and geographic boundaries with the varying strategic guidance due to the abstractness of the NSS. As parts of the U.S. governmental system, the

²³⁹Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 28-9.

²⁴⁰The last two sentences are from the following source: Raphael F. Perl, *International Drug Trade and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Congressional Research Service Report (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2006), 2-3.

numerous agencies charged with opposing Mexican DTO illicit activities develop their own sub-strategies to fill the gap in the absence of clearly defined guidance and objectives. Agencies start to work against each other in order to fulfill their internal strategies rather than working in cooperation to solve the overarching national strategy. For example, the Mérida Initiative provides to funding stream for current U.S. strategy to fight the war on drugs. The United States DOS controls that funding stream. Therefore, when other agencies like DOD, DOJ, and DHS attempt to provide their advice and assistance, the Mexican government and the DOS tend to marginalize input from other agencies due to the lack of authority to make decisions because they do not possess funding control. Hence, economic power becomes the default for which organizations obtain primacy over operations. The tension between funding control and authority creates artificial barriers due to resentment and competition for resources.²⁴¹

Organizational cultures also contribute to the creation of walls between U.S. agencies. Despite an attempt to unify intelligence efforts with organization reforms like Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), the government remains resistant to change due to legacy policies and the enduring cultures they produced. For example, the National Security Act created a legacy barrier and culture of “stove piping” information in order to protect the individual agencies’ turf. The Act outlined four distinctive “areas of responsibilities: supporting the president, engaging in clandestine activities abroad in support of national policy goals, protecting the United States against Soviet penetration, and supporting strategic military operations.”²⁴² These areas of responsibilities further subdivided amongst three powerful and well-established intelligence organizations: the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), State

²⁴¹Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 17, 43, 56.

²⁴²Mike McConnell, “Overhauling Intelligence,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 4 (July/August 2007), 51.

Department agencies, and DOD intelligence units, making it difficult to insert any new level of bureaucracy and justify its usefulness or leading role in a forced collaborative environment.

This organizational culture resistance was evident when President Barrack Obama authorized 1,200 National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border on 25 May 2010.²⁴³ The design for these troops was to originally serve as augmentees for U.S. Border Patrol agents until they could increase their internal manpower, as well as “build access roads for border patrols and to help spot smugglers.”²⁴⁴ During the first year, National Guard troops contributed to assisting in arrest and seizure of drugs. However, the majority of the credit began to flow toward the military and the perception of a “militarized U.S. border” began to rise. Therefore, National Guard troop participation changed to manning watchtowers and staring at “closed-circuit television screens of the fence line but were prohibited from making arrests.”²⁴⁵ State department officials claim the reduction in National Guard troop participation was due to the need to return strength back to civilian authorities.²⁴⁶ Once again, this example provides evidence of civilian-military tensions and the creation of artificial barriers that stifle any real whole-of-government approach.

Federal law generates barriers that limit agencies’ ability to cooperate and unify efforts. The Department of Defense and DHS are primary governmental organizations charged with the mission of interdiction along the U.S.-Mexico border.²⁴⁷ The Department of Defense traces its

²⁴³Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, 2011, 7.

²⁴⁴Brian Bennett, “National Guard Withdrawing 900 Troops from U.S.-Mexico Border,” *Los Angeles Times* (18 April 2012) <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/18/news/la-pn-national-guard-withdrawing-900-troops-from-the-usmexico-border-20120418> (accessed 14 October 2012).

²⁴⁵*Ibid.*

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*

²⁴⁷Dustin E. Phillips, “An Approach to the 40-Year Drug War” (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2012), 24.

primary role of aerial and maritime drug interdiction back to 1989.²⁴⁸ However, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibits U.S. Armed Forces from enforcing domestic law unless authorized by the President or Congress.²⁴⁹ This limits support from the DOD to provide surveillance and detection, as well as direct support via detainment and kinetic action. Thus, creating restriction on the amount of collaboration and cooperation can have with other agencies. Additionally, the DEA was the primary drug investigation agency which forced agencies to at least communicate with one another when linkages surfaced. However, the FBI received concurrent Title 21 authority (authority to investigate drug offenses) in 1982, enabling agencies to communicate less and increasing the interagency tension via an unwillingness to deviate from legacy jurisdictional roles.²⁵⁰

Crossing over jurisdictional boundaries also creates resistance from agency to agency. The DEA is an U.S. governmental agency that traditionally focuses on the threat of drugs and the organizations that perpetuate the concern. However, since the events of 9/11, the threat of terrorism and its connection with drugs drives agencies like the DEA to reevaluate their strategy and threat focus.²⁵¹ Illicit activity organizations like DTOs and transnational terrorist organizations act as non-rule based networks working “at the jurisdictional and geographic seams

²⁴⁸Phillips, “An Approach to the 40-Year Drug War,” 2012, 24.

²⁴⁹Ibid; “Amendment of the Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C. 1385) [section 1385 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure] in 1981 which outlines that Army and Air Force do not have the authority to detain or arrest individuals unless the accused is trespassing, damage, or intent to damage Department of Defense (DOD) property, to include the service members and their immediate family members.” United States House of Representatives, “18 USC Chapter 67 - Military and Navy,” *United States Code* (1 January 2012). <http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/18C67.txt> (accessed 28 February 2013).

²⁵⁰Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 118.

²⁵¹Ibid., 3.

of rule-driven organizations.”²⁵² Rule-based organizations do have the advantage of longevity due to their standing rules and procedures sustained over generations, but the standing power of rules also makes those same organizations slow to adapt.²⁵³ Thus, the need to change due to intertwining threats and the slow ability to change creates tension. This tension manifests itself in jurisdictional, geographic, and capability disputes between governmental organizations. Governmental organizations attempt to mitigate the dispute by formulating JJIM task forces, but “task forces are tactical in nature and address short-term threats,” lacking the ability to conduct long-term effects like shaping the environment.²⁵⁴ Joint task forces also lack a clearly defined lead agency at the headquarters level which creates competition for whom sets the guidance and who gets the credit.²⁵⁵ Therefore, short-term fixes are temporary solutions, meaning that joint task forces do not address the geographic segregation and gaps created by “single-mission organizations” at the upper levels of government. Geographic offices and regions, depicted in Figure 6, aggravate the tension amongst governmental organizations, contributing to jurisdictional gaps which DTOs exploit.

²⁵²Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 5.

²⁵³*Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 8.

²⁵⁵*Ibid.* The tactical joint task force level does have a clearly defined hierarchy of leadership. Contrarily, the headquarters level of the agencies participating in the joint task forces are not defined for the lead agency in charge of the violent situation in Mexico and its spillover effects. For example, there is not a single agency or governmental organization that funds, planning, and authorities channel though in order to synchronize efforts.

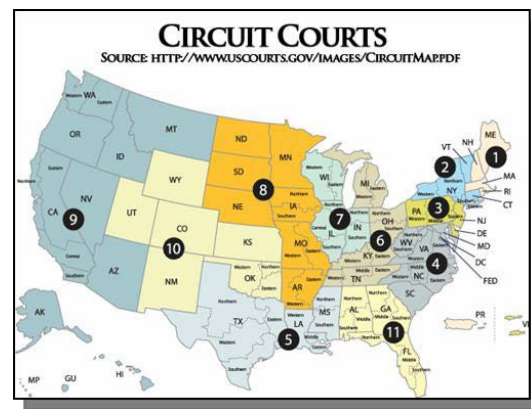
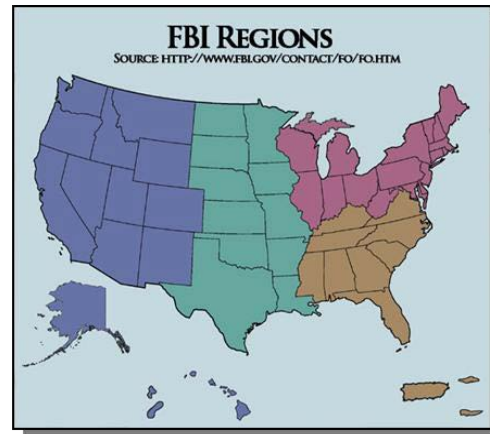
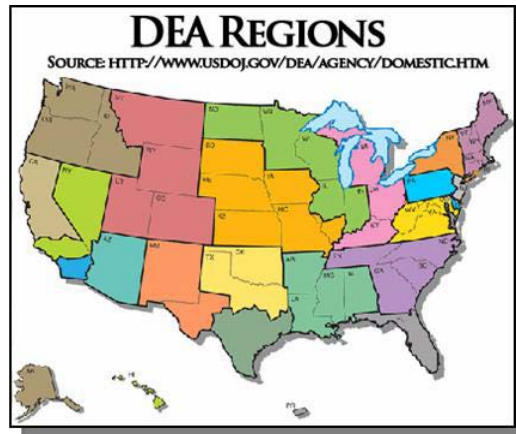


Figure 5. Differing Offices and Regions of United States Governmental Organizations.

Source: All of the jurisdictional maps are from governmental agency websites and are not subject to copyright authorization letters due to public domain access. Additionally, all maps are summarized by the following source: Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 7.

Finally, the investigation process also creates barriers among the agencies. Both the FBI and CIA have the same basic “goals in the war on drugs: identify, investigate, and arrest members of” DTOs as well as destroy their enterprises.²⁵⁶ However, each agency conducts these activities independently of one another due to concurring Title 21 authorities.²⁵⁷ Additionally, the two agencies conduct investigations and measure performance differently based upon their organization’s “philosophies and techniques.”²⁵⁸ Duplicated authorities coupled with cultural differences create “negative tendency for ‘lane encroachment’ during investigations, duplication of effort, lack of synchronization, and unhealthy, distrustful competition that the formation of a single mission entity (DEA) had been intended to resolve.”²⁵⁹ Therefore, these tactical level barriers make it extremely difficult to operationalize strategic guidance and link it the tactical actions.

The problem with linking Mexico’s strategic guidance to tactical operations is a function of the inconsistency of its national guidance. President Peña Nieto addressed this issue as his number one central idea for the Mexican government security strategy. He clearly states that Mexico is missing clearly defined objectives and that Mexican law enforcement and military efforts need better synchronization in order to more effectively counter DTOs activities.²⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Mexican governmental organizations also face similar dilemmas as the U.S. as they attempt to translate strategy to tactical efforts. They geographically separated their agencies

²⁵⁶Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 28.

²⁵⁷*Ibid.*

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 69.

²⁶⁰EGMO, “Peña Nieto Define Nueva Estrategia de Seguridad,” 2012.

as well as suffered from organizational cultural differences. To make things worse, corruption hindered Mexican agency efforts even further. During President Fox's term in office DTOs compromised legislators which resulted in a deadlock between local, state, and national level law enforcement and policy makers.²⁶¹ This resulted in the state's inability to develop a force with the necessary capacity to counter DTOs activity.²⁶² Therefore, even if the strategic guidance was efficient, the synchronization process and corrosion within governmental infrastructure was too extensive.

During President Calderón's term in office, the illicit business conducted by DTOs elevated to the level of war. Calderon's militarization strategy consisted of deploying 50,000 troops to nine of Mexico's thirty-two states. This resulted in an increased level of violence, creation of smaller more violent DTOs, the spread of routes and activities to neighboring countries to the south of Mexico, and numerous other unintended second and third order negative effects. Even though Calderón's strategy synchronized with tactical efforts, the strategy appeared to be more of a desperation move, rather than a well thought out and synchronized plan. Thus, the ability for the U.S. to synchronize efforts with Mexico became nearly impossible due to the erratic, ad hoc nature of Calderón's strategy.²⁶³ This complicates coordination and communication of strategy when both domestic and international guidance remain divergent, thus making it nearly impossible to nest tactical actions.

²⁶¹United Nations Security Council, "World Model United Nations 2012: Vancouver," 2012, 11.

²⁶²*Ibid.*

²⁶³*Ibid.*, 11-2.

CONCLUSION

The conflict that Mexico currently faces stems from the lucrative illegal drug trade, mostly with the United States. The U.S. expressed growing concerns over security and stability in the recent years due to spillover violence in the Southwest border region of the United States. In 2013, violence in Mexico will likely remain a significant threat nationwide to bystanders, law enforcement, military and local businesses.²⁶⁴ This observation comes from the fact that “overall levels of violence decreased during 2011, but cartel operations and competition continued to afflict several regions of Mexico throughout 2012. These dangers combined with continued fracturing among cartels, such as *los Zetas*, could cause overall violence to increase this year [2013].”²⁶⁵ The concern is not that the U.S. or Mexico lacks a strategy, because each country produces an abundant amount of strategic guidance for how to combat DTOs and their violence. The real problem lies in the unification and synchronization of the various and often competing strategies. Therefore, the fundamental problem appears to derive from the systemic structure of governmental organizations and their ability to collectively solve world problems. These organizations tend to focus on undertaking a single component of the complex problem and fail to shift back and forth from a reductionist to holistic mindset, which is necessary to recognize how components fit into the larger system.²⁶⁶ Organizational structures and institutions tend to become overinvolved in ‘projects’ or ‘programs’ that blind them to the emerging needs and changes of the

²⁶⁴Stratfor.com, “Mexico’s Drug War — Persisting Violence and a New President,” *Security Weekly* (17 January 2013) <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/mexicos-drug-war-persisting-violence-and-new-president> (accessed 17 March 2013).

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶⁶Dörner, *Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*, 1996, 38-41; Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 68-9.

overall operational environment which directly and indirectly contributes to current situation and should drive the creation of updated strategic goals.²⁶⁷

The legalization of drugs is a habitually argued solution because it could possibly reduce the income to the drug cartels in Mexico.²⁶⁸ However, if legalization of drugs in the United States has a secondary and tertiary effects, such providing a gateway to harder forms of illicit drugs and forcing DTOs to other non-drug related illicit activities, then a need for a secondary solution arises. Thus, a possible secondary, long-term solution would be to deter consumer addiction which curtails the demand aspect of the DTO business structure maybe the pressure needed to limit drug trafficking, distribution, and importation. The pressure of the kingpin strategy works to attrite command and control of DTOs. However, DTOs continue to run like a well-oiled machine devoid of any real leadership which makes it easy for the next to assume the figurehead role.

The problem is not so much that the U.S. and Mexico lack a strategic guidance and whether that guidance is correct. The problem appears to be two fold. First national strategies create isolated strategies that only focus on one aspect of the problem. As a result organizations are organized, trained, equipped, and conditioned to deal with only a single aspects of the DTO business model.

The second issue is located within the individual governmental organizations charged with developing and executing an approach that links the strategic goal to the current situation. Governmental organizations interpret the NSS guidance based upon their perspectives, influenced by their organizational culture. Due to their biased approach to the problem and the desire to obtain credit, which leads to increased resources and individual promotions, organizations

²⁶⁷Dörner, *Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*, 1996, 18.

²⁶⁸Kilmer, *Reducing Drug Trafficking Revenues and Violence in Mexico: Would Legalizing Marijuana in California Help?*, 2010, 19-26, 43-5.

become more self-protectionists. Governmental organizations are less likely to support the efforts of another parallel organization because it means that the principle organization obtains the credit.²⁶⁹ Therefore, agencies that are justifying the existence of their organization seek to design their own approach to the problem devoid of any real synchronization with other JIIM organizations. Essentially, the U.S. military struggled prior to the implementation of 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act with the same issue.²⁷⁰ The narrative and rhetoric say that coordination, collaboration, and planning of military operations work best when conducted jointly. Therefore, adopting an operational approach that links strategic guidance to tactical efforts incorporates simultaneity, depth, and tempo across the full array of JIIM organizations through synchronized attacks against DTOs leaders, disruption of the illegal drug market, economic develop efforts from international assistance, and the implementation of information operations. This can only occur with long-term policy designed specifically to complement these efforts. A combined military, economic, and informational approach collectively supported by intentional, regional, and domestic policies appear to be the most logical way to get the current situation to the desired goals of order and, ultimately, peace within Mexico, as it did with Colombia in the 1990s.²⁷¹ This concept is not new or groundbreaking, however, the implementation of doctrine, especially U.S. Army doctrine appears to be somewhat hollow. Instead of piecemealing the elements of national power in order to subdue or contain DTOs and the associated violence, the U.S. and Mexican governments need to fully commit to the fight

²⁶⁹Klun, *War of Drugs: Lessons Learned from 35 Years of Fighting Asymmetric Threats*, 2010, 35.

²⁷⁰Charles G. Cogan, "Desert One and Its Disorders," *Journal of Military History* 67, no.1 (January 2003), 201-2.

²⁷¹Sylvia M. Longmire and John P. Longmire IV, "Redefining Terrorism: Why Mexican Drug Trafficking is More than Just Organized Crime," *Journal of Strategy Studies* (2008), 49-50.

against DTOs by using a mutually supporting lines of effort and lines of operation from JIIM organizations. If strategic guidance remains unsynchronization and focus remains centered on metrics that only produce short term results, then operational planning and tactical execution will continue to diverge.

The second step in the United States Army Design Methodology is to synthesize and understand the goals or aims of a nation's strategic leadership.²⁷² If that guidance remains unclear or disconnected from the guidance provided to other joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational organizations, then operational planners cannot truly design an approach that provides a unified purpose, synchronized over space and time to tactical units in order to achieve strategic success.²⁷³

Operational planners and tacticians will always find a way to accomplish the mission, no matter how ill-defined it may be. However, the overall success of a war remains on a collision path with disaster if strategy lacks the ability to provide a clear and unified vision for stability and security in Mexico, the region, and the international community. A solution to this problem is willingness to divest of unproductive policies, programs, and initiatives. It also entails a combined JIIM effort that can identify when the current solution is not working and adapt rapidly in order to synchronize the civilian-military energies from all of the parties involved. Therefore, it is up to our national, regional, and international leadership to recognize the need for change and attempt new theoretical methodologies to subside the violence in Mexico. The current strategy of focusing on kingpin elimination and the amount of seized drugs are metrics that only look at

²⁷²Bruce Stanley, "D400 Design Course AS 13-01," Course Syllabus (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013), 1.

²⁷³Strategic success is a very contentious group of words. How is success determined and what are the appropriate metrics to indicate progressions are highly debatable and extremely subjective. The measure of success is a topic that exceeds the scope of this monograph and one that needs to be researched in depth.

attacking one dimension of the DTOs system rather than concentrating unified efforts on the holistic nature of the DTO enterprise. It is incumbent upon our leadership to embrace the more difficult and “profound aspects of leadership: ability to see over the horizon and into the future, ability to devise new policies, programs and methods to deal with anticipated changes, and finally the ability to persuade others that the old ways must give way to the new.”²⁷⁴ Thus, fostering leaders’ and their staffs’ ability to conceptually work through the process of bridging the gap between strategy and tactics.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴Hart, "The McChrystal Way of War: Review," 2013.

²⁷⁵Experimentation builds theory. History shows us what has been tried before, so as we learn from our past what not to do, so must we be willing to attempt what others have not. “The world of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries requires experimentation, with all the uncertainties and likelihood of failure such experiments imply.” Ibid.

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